MOTHER BICKERDYKE IN 1896

Mother Bickerdyke

AS I KNEW HER

By FLORENCE SHAW KELLOGG

With an Introduction by

JENKIN LLOYD JONES

"A full rich nature, free to trust,
Truthful and almost sternly just,
Keeping with many a light disguise
The secret of self sacrifice.
How many a poor one's blessing went
With thee beneath the low, green tent
Whose curtain never outward swings."

—*Whittier.*

UNITY PUBLISHING COMPANY
The Abraham Lincoln Centre
CHICAGO
1907

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To
JENKIN LLOYD JONES
whose faithful friendship made it possible, this
little book is affectionately dedicated by
THE AUTHOR

Fay, Kansas, 1907

CONTENTS.

Chapter.		Page.
	Introduction	7
I.	The First Call	21
II.	School Days and After	29
III.	The Son's Letter	35
IV.	Work Among the Sick and Poor	41
V.	With Her at Home	47
VI.	Stories of Army Life	53
VII.	Stories of Service	59
VIII.	Still With the Army	71
IX.	In New York and Elsewhere	81
X.	The Next Thing	87
XI.	Back from California	93
XII.	Letter of a Mutual Friend	99
XIII.	The Eightieth Birthday	103
XIV.	The Last Years	111
XV.	Good-Bye to Earth	117
XVI.	Honor to Mother Bickerdyke	123
XVII.	The Religious Life	129
XVIII.	Old Letters	135
XIX.	Letters from the Front	143
XX.	Other Letters	151
XXI.	In Which We Say Good-Bye	157

Appendix.

Dedication of Mother Bickerdyke's Monument	163
Bibliography	175

INTRODUCTION.

War is a corporate expression of the barbaric element still left in civilization. It witnesses to the ignorance, weakness and wickedness of man. Poor human nature, distrustful of its diviner leadings, unmindful of the heavenly guiding, rushes to war. There has never been a war that might not have been avoided had the saner counsels of the wise obtained.

Frankly admitting, then, that the sword, bullet and bayonet are but extensions of the fang, claw and horn, it readily follows that the time is coming when, like their brute forerunners, they will gradually become ornamental traditions, then linger awhile as abortions until they are finally abolished forever.

Meanwhile we must as frankly admit that there are conditions more dire than war; that liberty, justice and honor are more valuable than life, and that when these cannot be won or maintained in life or by living, they must be purchased by the blood of the noblest, the lives of the best. There can be but one supreme justification for war, viz., liberty and the just chances that go therewith. That war, then, is the noblest that secures the highest results in these directions.

Judged by these tests, the noblest struggle ever waged on battlefield was that for the freedom of the slave and the preservation of the American republic in the years 1861-65 A. D. Measured by the number and gauged by the intelligence, courage, self-denial and humanitarian motives as well as by the momentous results, this war stands very near the shining line where war must cease. For war is to cease, not because it becomes too expensive, too terrible, or so triumphant that none dare challenge it, but because human nature will become too noble; men will grow too wise and women too influential to resort to such coarse, cruel and wasteful settlement of disputes which, settled by such methods, leave the main struggle still to be waged and the ultimate result still to be achieved.

In round numbers there were enlisted in the service of the Union from 1861-'65 about 2,850,000 souls. Of these, 56,000 were killed on the battlefield, 219,000 died of wounds and disease in military hospitals; it is estimated that 200,000 were permanently crippled or otherwise disabled; 134,000 of these soldiers sleep in nameless graves; 180,000 colored men enlisted in this army and fought in their own behalf; 30,000 of these died in the service,—all this that 4,000,000 human beings might no longer be enslaved, bought and sold as so many sheep and cattle by any "superior" race; and further, that their posterity might forever be free from this bondage, and that

democracy in its highest experiment and fullest development should have continued chance to make good the claims set forth in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created free and equal" in their right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Perhaps half as many men were enlisted on the other side, and it is now clearly seen that they also were largely actuated by high motives and swayed by noble inspirations. They, too, had "Liberty!" for their rallying cry; they, too, were valorous for home and for justice; they, too, died bravely with a human cry upon their lips and a human cause warming their hearts. The only irreconcilable difference between the two armies was that they who rose in rebellion against the Union had not yet learned that soul is not a thing of color; that the black-skinned children of the All Father were human; that the dusky mother-heart was still motherly, and that God's best name is "Father" in Africa, as in Europe or in America; that race lines when surveyed by the millenniums of human history and the cosmic aeons become superficial, incidental accompaniments to the great fundamental unity that is proved by an identity of hopes, fears, loves, hates, strengths, weaknesses, and, above all, tendencies and aspirations.

This primal mistake of the revolutionists denied for them the finer inspirations that go with the strong who fight for the weak, the highest courage and power of the noblest,—*noblesse oblige!*

The crowning achievement of that war was a solution that commended itself to the ultimate judgment, and, still more, related itself to the ultimate well being of the vanquished as well as the vanquisher, as the hasty flight of the short forty years that have already intervened clearly proves.

But oh, the horrible price! The cost of it all! This cannot be brought home to us by recounting the mighty aggregation of figures, or dealing in sweeping generalities.

More impressive than these figures and more persuasive than any generalities is the sight of a crippled veteran, and still more so the study of a broken home circle.

As a contribution to this study, there is offered here the story of one woman's life, a plain widow who, without leisure, social standing, political or church influence, came to be the peer, oftentimes the terror, of high officials, the admiration of generals, the recipient of great trusts, the distributor of uncounted treasure, the admiration, the love, the consolation and inspiration of hundreds of thousands of soldiers who learned to give her the pre-eminent word of the heart—"Mother."

On the eighth day of November, 1901, in her far away western home at Bunker Hill, Kansas, Mary A. Bickerdyke passed to her rest in the eighty-fourth year of her age.

This book is one more attempt to tell the story of this woman's life, but notwithstanding the loving loyalty, the close

acquaintance, and the skillful movement of the pen, guided by high appreciation of the work as well as of the worker, the story is necessarily inadequately told. It must ever be so. The deepest experiences of the human soul, the highest achievements of the human will, the divinest revealments of the human heart, ever baffle the maker of sentences, ever escape the printed page. A mother's kiss, the desolation of a discouraged man, the tears of a home-sick boy, are beyond the reach of all the arts. Poetry, painting, statuary, music, are all inadequate to the task.

But these pages will show that the best blood America can boast flowed in her veins; that the Mayflower contributed to the heirlooms of her family; that her maternal grandfather was a bare-footed soldier boy of sixteen at the battle of Bunker Hill; that he was the one who kept the fires burning on the shore when Washington crossed the Delaware; that he kept his place in the ranks through the seven years of war; that he was the recipient of a pair of socks from the hand of Martha Washington, a pair of her own knitting, and that the old Commander recognized and greeted the faithful follower who had ridden on his black stallion all the way from Ohio to salute him. It will also be seen that the blood of her paternal grandfather mingled with that of Mary Ball, the mother of Washington.

The story will tell how this nobly born woman was orphaned when but seventeen months old, on the pioneer line of the then new state of Ohio, where she fondled her pets, learned to break colts, evolved the dress out of flax and the wool grown in the clearing, and became an eager student in the log schoolhouse with its puncheon seats and goose-quill pens. At sixteen she won her way to that splendid nursery of stalwarts—Oberlin College. The great President, Charles Finney, put his stamp upon her; he taught her to believe "that woman had a right to do anything she was fitted for, and that a negro had a right to an equal chance in the race of life." And he further taught her that to assert these rights was one of the cardinal virtues.

Six weeks before her completion of the four years' course an epidemic of fever called her home. Cholera was raging in Cincinnati; there was a call for nurses, and Mary Ball entered upon her life work, unconsciously receiving the training that was to place her unquestionably at the head of that long and benignant line of nurses that lit up the lurid battle pages of the awful war with angel radiance. Mary Safford, Mrs. Porter, Louisa Alcott, Clara Barton, Mary A. Livermore, are in that shining line. But judged by the continuous service, the scope and extent of her work and her subsequent place in the affections of the soldier and the annals of the northern army, Mary A. Bickerdyke leads them all.

This story will tell how, in 1847, Bishop Mellvane of Cincinnati solemnized the vows that made her a home-maker and

inducted her into that apprenticeship of motherhood that was to find so capacious a fulfillment. Four children adopted by marriage, two welcomed through the gates of birth, two homeless nephews, with occasional relays of orphans from the Five Point Mission of New York, sent westward, mark her apprenticeship.

In 1856 the waning health of her husband brought them to a new home near Galesburg, Illinois. Two years later she was left the sole head of the family, poor in everything except the tremendous energy of the mother whose work ranged from the wash-tub to the sick chamber.

In 1861 the Galesburg City Directory contained the entry:

"Mary A. Bickerdyke, widow of Robert, botanic physician, office and residence Prairie street."

Then the storm broke; the war came, and Lincoln's first 75,000 volunteers were marching southward. The Commandant at Cairo found himself overwhelmed with a lot of raw, fever-smitten, home-sick soldiers. A cry for help was read one Sunday morning by Dr. Edward Beecher, Pastor of the Congregational church at Galesburg, of which she was a member. Five hundred dollars' worth of sanitary stores were contributed that morning, and an unnumbered hundred-thousand dollars' worth of soul in the person of Mary A. Bickerdyke were hurried southward. Mary Safford, the "Cairo Angel," was already at work, and there began the career of army nurse that did not end until the last soldier was discharged from the Springfield hospital in 1866.

It is not fitting that the Introduction should anticipate the text that is to follow, but the story is so fascinating, so strong, aye, so sweet and tender, that it is hard to resist the temptation to anticipate the telling.

Her first move seems to have been for bath-tubs. This is most significant. The pile of empty hogsheads were sawed in two, and every sick soldier had a bath. Then began the benign stream of clean linen that for five years flowed through her hands for the salvation of body and the renewal of soul.

The citizens of Cairo had fitted up a diet kitchen; she assumed command, a place to which she was called by divine fitness. Here also began her battle with official red tape, incompetency and cupidity, which lasted through the five years.

The delicacies and comforts she controlled here were sore temptations to the unscrupulous. Once she found a "sanitary" shirt on a luckless lieutenant whom she proceeded to disrobe, to the amusement of his companions. "Now, you rascal, let's see what you'll steal next!" and she left him in his luckless plight.

Missing delicacies from her pantry, some dried peaches were stewed one day and left to cool on the kitchen table. In due time there was distress among the waiters, stewards and ward-masters. "Umph, umph, so peaches don't agree with you, eh?

You may be worse off next time you eat stolen sauce; there will be ratsbane in it some night!''

A refrigerator with a lock on it was ordered from the north. One night the lock was broken and the next morning there was a cook in the guardhouse. Thus it was all along the line.

''By whose authority are you here?'' said a surgeon to her.

''I am here in obedience to the Lord God Almighty! Have you any higher authority? Stand out of my way!'' was the answer.

But this divine authority was soon certified to by the necessary mundane officials. All right-minded surgeons soon begged for her assistance, and those high in command saluted her.

''Who is the complainant?'' asked General Sherman of an officer with a grievance.

''That meddlesome old woman from the north,'' was the reply.

''Oh, well, I can do nothing for you; she outranks me,'' said the general.

The following pass was issued: ''All guards, pickets and military authorities will pass and re-pass Mrs. Mary A. Bickerdyke from any point within the lines, and all military railroads and chartered steamboats will grant her free transportation. By order of General U. S. Grant.''

Early in her career she was active with this document. Under special stress General Sherman gave orders that no civilian or sanitary stores should be transported on a railroad until further orders.

''How came you here against orders?'' said the surprised General.

''Because I have a pass from General Grant,'' was the response.

''Scurvy is showing itself in the front; the soldiers need the vegetable diet; there is plenty at Nashville; I want permission to bring some to the front.''

The General was relenting. ''I will take it up with you tomorrow.''

''No you don't, General Sherman. What's the use of fooling? Give me orders for two carloads a day from Nashville south, right now, and I will be satisfied.''

The General relented just then, and soon she was distributing potatoes and onions up and down the railroad line from Huntsville to Chattanooga, herself riding among the barrels, seeing that the supplies were distributed among the boys.

Thus was it ever. Independent, aggressive, when necessary defiant, a terror to the selfish and the arbitrary, but gentle as a mother to her babe to the suffering and the dependent.

At this distance all will take her tenderness for granted. Her mother-heart is proved by the touch with which heaven

endowed her, by the loving suffrage of thousands of the boys whom she had nursed back to life, wooed out of home-sickness into cheerfulness, shamed out of despondency into courage, saved in spite of enemies' bullets or the more menacing discouragement of the camp.

I wish I might with equal emphasis persuade the reader of the splendid energy, the great executive ability, the mighty captaincy of this woman. The practical sagacity that revealed itself at Cairo never deserted her. Her hospital boat was the first to land at Pittsburgh Landing after the battle of Shiloh when the crafts of war were crude, and there seemed to be lint and bandages, clean linen and hot coffee, sugar and milk, wherever she went.

Mother Bickerdyke was the great laundress of the army; her washing camps were a sight to behold. One of the early shipments from Chicago consisted of great kettles, mangles and other material for laundering on a large scale. She never lacked help; every camp swarmed with contrabands that were as wax to her hands. Every soldier, convalescent or otherwise, from private to colonel, was glad of any detail that would enable him to help Mother Bickerdyke. At Corinth, Memphis, Vicksburg, Big Black, Chattanooga, Atlanta, I was witness to her washers, her cooks, her traveling bakers, and her exhaustless supply of linen.

When Sherman cast off from Atlanta towards the sea he sent her around via Louisville with orders to meet him via the Atlantic ocean. At Baltimore her loaded ship was waiting for the news; she heard the click of the telegraph about as soon as it was heard at Washington, and the boat cast off. But at Wilmington she met a gaunt band of Andersonville prisoners, the sorriest sight of the war. She stayed to soothe and to see that they were all provided for before proceeding to meet her Chief.

Thus was it ever. Her inventiveness, her power to execute, her immediateness, made her the great general she was. Had she worn trousers and had she been released from this more benign generalship, she would undoubtedly have made a great commander. She was never without resources.

Returning to her hospital late one night she found that the surgeon-in-chief had ordered all the contrabands beyond hospital limits. It was a stroke at her power. The night was dark and stormy; the streets of Memphis were unlighted; danger lurked everywhere, but she summoned her "Handy Andy" and the mules. "Come," she said to Mrs. Livermore, "we must find General Hurlbut's headquarters." When Mrs. Livermore urged the folly and danger of undertaking such a night journey, "Well, if you are such a coward Andy and I will go alone," was the reply. But Mrs. Livermore was no coward, and she went along. They floundered through the black streets, through rain and mud, passing guards without countersign, until they found a night officer whom they over-

ruled and he gave them the countersign. It was away after midnight when they reached the headquarters. The General was in bed, but he was routed out, and by the light of the single lantern the two women and the trusty driver found their way back with the order authorizing Mother Bickerdyke to retain the use of such contraband service at the hospital as she wished as long as she pleased. Of course there was a scene next morning, but it was not Mother Bickerdyke that went to the wall.

When Logan's soldiers were approaching Washington for the grand review, the inefficiency of the commissary department left the men hungry. General Logan telegraphed Mother Bickerdyke; she telegraphed Rev. Dr. Bellows of New York, "Logan's troops coming in hungry; no supplies." The dispatch reached the president of the Sanitary Commission on Sunday morning and he read it in his church to the assembled congregation and answered, "Supplies coming." At five o'clock that afternoon five cars loaded with crackers started from New York to Washington. It came too late, the officer said, for distribution that night. "Nonsense!" said Mother Bickerdyke, "the boys are hungry and they are going to have their supper." She ordered up the wagons, directed her trains to where the boys were ready to receive her, as ever, with their cheers, their tears and their blessings.

After the grand review she followed Logan back to the West. At Louisville she heard of soldiers down on the Mississippi river dying of scurvy, needing potatoes and onions. That night she arranged with the captain, who was to leave the levee early in the morning, to take a supply of potatoes along. A pitiless rain storm was deluging Louisville that morning. The captain, assuming that Mother Bickerdyke would not attempt to bring potatoes in such a storm, cast off a few minutes before time. He was in midstream when she with her wagons and her colored attendants hove in sight. The driver halted and said, "It is too late!"

"It is not too late!" she said, "that captain has got to come back."

Into the middle of the muddy street and the driving rain she jumped and stood waving her shaker bonnet with such imperative command that no Captain dared disobey. He returned, and in an apologetic tone said, "I didn't think you could get here." The reply was characteristic,—"Didn't I tell you I would?"

Mother Bickerdyke's work was not confined to the front. Over and over again, as will be seen in this narrative, she flew northward, sometimes by the connivance of friends who tried to make her rest. Her headquarters when she came north were generally at the home of Mary Livermore in Chicago. Here Chicago ladies, as is their wont, would try to do her honor. They would arrange for teas and receptions, but her reply was ever:

"This is no time for frolicking; there is a big war on hand."

And she was out raising money, stimulating contributions, directing shipments, looking after the families of some of her "boys," arranging for their orphaned children in schools, asylums and farms. Her great raid upon the farmers of northern Illinois, which enabled her in less than twenty days to carry 200 cows and upwards of a thousand laying hens to her sick camp of 15,000 souls in Memphis who, as she said, were trying to get nourishment out of "secesh milk," half chalk and water, for which they were paying fifty cents a quart, has been told over and over again, but only those of us who were at the front can know the thrilling story, and we can never tell it.

When the smallpox hospital was cleaned like the Augean stables by this woman who combined the courage and power of Hercules with the wisdom and dignity of Athene, when there were no more sick to need the milk and the eggs, the cows and the chickens were distributed among the families of her faithful contrabands on the island in the Mississippi to begin life on.

My temptation to anticipate or repeat the post-bellum story of Mother Bickerdyke is not so great as it has been concerning her war triumphs, for of her army campaignings the present writer can truthfully say,—"much of which I have seen and a little of which I have been."

Mother Bickerdyke was not one of the "Old Soldiers" who were content to spend the rest of their lives in "shouldering a crutch and showing how fields were won."

Perhaps no one is better prepared to tell the story of Mother Bickerdyke after the war than is the author of this book. How close she has been to the adequate sources of information and how truthfully and skillfully she has used her material, we leave to the testimony of the grateful and delighted reader. But here again the real story, the post-bellum life of Mother Bickerdyke, can never adequately be told. Whether as Matron of the Home for the Friendless in Chicago, a position which she could not hold because she said she "could not walk around in a peck measure," or as emigrant agent, encouraging the old soldiers to find homes on Kansas farms, or as distributor of a ten thousand dollar fund furnished by eastern railroads to the fire sufferers in Michigan and Chicago in 1871, or in a four years' career as missionary among the poor in New York city, where she speaks of visiting hundreds of homes, but never making a prayer—a cake of soap, a comb and towel were her first weapons—or as the founder of a school for neglected children on the Pacific coast, or hurrying to the relief of the locust-smitten farmers of Kansas—all the while the story is wonderful beyond telling, because it passes the comprehension of ordinary mortals.

All the while she was pension agent, with a roving commission, to help those who did not know how to help themselves, to counsel those who had no money to pay for counselors. At last, twenty years after the war, she who had secured hundreds of thousands of dollars of pensions for others, became the object of solicitation on the part of her "Boys," and a movement was set on foot among the old soldiers to secure her a pension. The bill was introduced into the lower house by John D. Long of Massachusetts, and into the Senate by Senator Logan. It was reported upon by the committees with the most hearty endorsements, setting forth the fact that in the estimation of the competent she had done more work for the army than any brigadier general and had saved more lives than any one surgeon, and still, notwithstanding the high estimate, the heroic house committee recommended that the amount be cut down from fifty to twenty-five dollars per month. "That she got and nothing more!"

How great the shame of it! How valiant the action of those public servants! How brave their guarding of the public treasury! Better not to scrutinize their votes when the "appropriation bill" was on its passage.

The closing years of Mother Bickerdyke were serene ones, living with her son, Prof. James Roger Bickerdyke, County Superintendent of Schools at Bunker Hill, Kansas, and when in the fullness of her years she fell asleep, her body was borne with loving hands to the old Galesburg home where, followed by a weeping multitude of old associates and neighbors, it was laid to rest beside the dust of husband and children.

I have tried to keep the first person singular in the background in this Introduction. I was a member of the Western army for three years. From 1862 to the end of the war I kept my place in the front line of the fighting column under Grant, Sherman and Logan, "a high private in the rear rank" of the Sixth Wisconsin Light Artillery. Early in the war I learned to call her "Mother," and through all the succeeding years the title has become more real, more near and dear to me.

My personal acquaintance with her began a few days after the battle of Corinth in October, 1862. I was a patient in the general hospital which she helped to move in the dead of night following the first day's engagement, while cannon balls shrieked overhead and not infrequently fell in the midst of tents and mules. I was a fever-smitten patient, weak and wasted, with an unwashed body, wrapped in a coarse white flannel shirt, fouled by two weeks of fever. I can no better describe the touch of this angel hand than to quote from a letter which I sent to the great heart some seven years before she was mustered out of service.

"At Corinth I was one of the helpless burdens in the general hospital, whom you assailed with helpful indignation be-

cause I did not 'stand up for my rights,' when you found me in a dirty shirt and without proper attendance. You scolded me soundly, threw me into a capacious clean night shirt, and slapped me around generally, but kept me in mind. Three or four days of your blessed abusiveness and irrepressible cheer turned the tide in favor of life."

After this I often caught glimpses of her at Memphis, Vicksburg, Huntsville; the last time I remember seeing her, she was silhouetted against the blackness of night by the blazing log fires on a cold December night near Chickamauga at the foot of Missionary Ridge, as we were returning from the pursuit of Bragg's army.

Years after, when I saw Charlotte Cushman play the role of Walter Scott's "Meg Merrilies," I could but think of Mother Bickerdyke. Like Scott's heroine, interpreted by the great Queen of the Stage, Mother Bickerdyke's spirit was so imposing that it exaggerated the height of her body; so flashing was her will that at times it concealed the tenderness in the depths of the blue eye; so decisive and quick were her words that you sometimes failed to detect promptly the geniality in her accents, the tender, loving tones in her voice.

This word picture of her, given by a fellow townsman, Dr. Woodward, in the beginning of her nurse's career in Cairo, will answer all the way through:

"Let me describe my heroine: A large, heavy woman of forty-five years, strong as a man; muscles of iron; nerves of finest steel; sensitive, but self-reliant; kind and tender; seeking all for others, nothing for herself."

During one of Mrs. Livermore's earliest visits to the hospital on the battlefield she found men in tears because, they said, "Mother Bickerdyke has gone down the river and we shall all die." A surgeon on one of the hospital boats, after the battle of Shiloh, said, "On the deck and in the cabin the cry was 'Mother!' 'Mother!' 'Mother!'"

Long after the close of the war she came all the way from California to attend an annual reunion of old soldiers. There was a disturbance at the back of the hall which the presiding officer was unable to suppress. "Order! Order!" cried the President as he violently wielded his gavel. From the back of the hall came the retort, "Shut up yourself, Mother Bickerdyke is here!" Then there was an impromptu adjournment. Strong men sobbed like children, embraced and caressed her as a child. The dear old mother with tears running down her face retorted, "Boys, how you behave! You ought to be ashamed of yourselves!"

To the end, the old hands, though distorted by hard work and swollen by frequent poisonings from malignant wounds, the hands that had soothed unnumbered brows when hot with fever and closed thousands of dying eyes, the hands that composed the limbs and bathed the beautiful features of General McPherson as she prepared the body of this nineteenth

century knight for its last journey to the stricken mother in Ohio, were helping and helpful hands. Fitting was the song "To Mother's Hands," that was sung at her grave. Who once having felt their touch can ever forget them, still less describe them?

And that voice—the voice that sounded like an angel's trumpet; the voice that often broke the silence and the solemnity of the hospital with the trembling, soothing notes of "The Shining Shore," still rings in the ears of those who were softened by her vehemence, made gentle by her severity, strong in her courage.

In religion as in medicine and politics, she was an Eclectic, communing now with Methodist and now with Presbyterian, Congregationalist or Unitarian as she "happened to light on them," as she put it. Mary Livermore tells how she once asked her, "Why do you waste your strength on such a worthless fellow at seventy-three?" Turning to her with a flash of her blue eye, she answered, "Mary Livermore, I have a commission from the Lord God Almighty to do all I can for every miserable creature who comes in my way. He is always sure of two friends—God and me."

Many years ago she sent her teacher son to intercept me at Topeka, Kansas, where I had gone to lecture before the State Teachers' Association, with instructions to bring me home with him. How the heart responded to the invitation! My spirit leapt towards the Kansas cottage, but the cruel fetters of circumstances, the hard, cold ties of "previous engagements" forbade. I vainly dreamed of the pleasure and pride of securing the dear Mother for my own platform, of presenting her to my own people, of seeing and hearing her in my own pulpit, and this was a pleasure to which she also keenly looked forward. But alas! the pleasure was not for her, and the privilege was not for me. A little over three years after her death I shaped my annual March escape from the inhospitable weather of Chicago in such a way that I might visit the Bunker Hill cottage and cultivate an intimacy with the faithful son whose life was so interwoven with the mother's. But here again I was doomed to disappointment, for only three or four months before my arrival the beloved teacher and the loyal son had joined the great and good mother.

In my disappointment I remembered that I was in the neighborhood of an old correspondent, one of the shut-in post-office missionaries, a whilom contributor to UNITY. A twelve-mile ride on a hard-riding broncho pony carried me from Russell, the nearest railway station, to Fay postoffice, which consisted of a little one-story stone cottage home on a typical western ranch. My correspondent and her sturdy ranchman-husband waved their welcome from afar, and the good man climbed the hill to meet me. The greeting was as delightful to me as it was cordial on their part, but the delight was

changed to something like awe upon entering the attractive little room which was at once bedroom, parlor, library and sanctum. Hanging over the bed, upon which for many long years the house-bound invalid had lain, was a large crayon portrait of Mother Bickerdyke, beautifully framed, natural as life. The old geniality radiated as of old.

"Why, that is Mother Bickerdyke!"

"Do you know her?"

"Why, I am one of her boys! I came hither in quest of her son; I was homesick for further tidings of her; another touch of her life!"

My visit was of but a few short hours, for night found me again at the railway station, chasing the next engagement. But the stay was long enough to yield communion on many lines, to discover many points of comradeship with those brave home-makers who for many years had been toiling to make the desert blossom as the rose, to build on the wind-swept prairie a home from which went forth the intelligence and consecration that shaped the laws of the great sun-flower state and touched its highways with culture and its community with the freedom that is devout and the devoutness that is free.

But at no point did we find more comradeship than at the feet of Mother Bickerdyke, and before I left, mine hostess had re-awakened within her the abandoned purpose to write the story of "Mother Bickerdyke as I knew her," and the plan of first publishing it serially in the pages of UNITY was an added inspiration, for UNITY had been friend and companion to her through the long years of illness and isolation.

The realization of this plan was necessarily accompanied by the delays and difficulties and the imperfections incident to amateur journalism, but here it is at last. Through the generosity of some friends of the soldier, we are permitted to present in book form the material that first appeared in the columns of UNITY, essentially as it there appeared. Mrs. Kellogg has written the book out of her heart, and consequently every page is instinct with the fundamental element of literary grace and power, viz., sincerity and sympathetic earnestness.

My old comrades of the army will, like myself, read the story with tear-dimmed eyes as we live over again the gruesome experiences, rough on the outside but touched with tenderness within. And I hope that many of the sons and daughters of the veterans, the children of more lenient circumstances, will read this story of Mother Bickerdyke and realize with what great price their liberty and their opportunity have been bought.

And surely, some one sooner or later will be stirred by this version of the story by Mrs. Kellogg to search further, to read more widely, and out of greater leisure and the calmer perspective of greater distances, to shape the story in better pro-

portions and tell it more accurately, for the last estimate has not yet been made of Mother Bickerdyke. But, as already hinted, the best of the story can never be written, and they who, like Mrs. Kellogg, have basked in the sunshine of her radiant life, and, like the present writer, have known the healing touch of her helpful presence, know most of the indescribable and have felt most of the unutterable.

It is with great pleasure that I have intruded these introductory words upon a tale that needs no introduction.

May these peaceful blossoms grown by the rough husbandry of war hasten the time when war shall be no more.

Abraham Lincoln Centre, Chicago, April 5, 1907.

Mother Bickerdyke's Birthplace at Mansfield, Ohio

CHAPTER I.

"The beginning of a true friendship is an era in one's life —the beginning of a forever."

THE FIRST CALL.

A year ago when the Senior Editor spent one never-to-be-forgotten day in our ranch home here on the "Sun-kissed prairies of Kansas," I promised to tell the readers of UNITY of Mother Bickerdyke as I knew her in the last ten years of her busy, care-filled life, during which she was the devoted home-maker for her bachelor son, Prof. J. R. Bickerdyke, who, in 1888, was elected county superintendent of public instruction of Russell County, and held that office through several terms. To his untiring efforts it is due that

our schools are raised to a high level and set upon a solid basis of excellence and worth. Though his name was well known in the educational world, and he ranked as one of the best and most earnest educators of the state, he was her "baby"—her "Jimmy boy"—receiving in these years some measure of the care and petting he was obliged to forego when the call came to her and she went out to the larger, wider service among the "boys in blue."

The mutual love and devotion between mother and son was very beautiful. As he said "The sympathy between us is so close and complete that if mother gets sick, I am sick too, and if I am sick it makes her so. Mother and I suffer or rejoice together always." He was such a man as the world most needs, one we could ill afford to spare, and yet it seemed only natural and most right and beautiful that in death they were not long divided. But three short years after her summons home—years in which he went bravely on with his work, but with ever a sense of loss and loneliness in his heart—but three such years and he, too, was called. Faith can picture the glad reunion and see them going on together there even as they did here, and all who love them must be glad for them now.

He was only a little boy when she began her work as an army nurse. I have heard him tell how his boy-heart used to ache as she kissed him "good bye," and he watched, through tear-blinded eyes, for the last wave of her hand as the train bore her away, and how desolate and alone he felt as he went back to the school where she had arranged for a home for him during her absence. The memory of that time with the pain he bore bravely, being a worthy son of a brave mother, and all the years of separation from her, added much to the joy he felt in having her with him in the later years and helped to make them "one and inseparable."

"Jimmy ought to get married," she told me, "I'm getting old and can't make his home what it ought to

be; but," she added, and I can see yet the soft shining of her eyes as she spoke, "he says 'there's no one like mother' for him, and he really doesn't seem to want anyone else while he has me." So the quiet years passed and no one came to change the close relation of mother and son. He was indeed "faithful unto death," and, in so far as he might, he joined gladly in all her plans and work for the relief of the sick and poor that were always with her. His salary was always at her command, but, so large and ample were her charities, so little able was she to say "No" to anyone in need, that it, combined with the all too small and tardy pension finally granted her, was nearly all used for others while her own needs were set aside and so nearly forgotten by her that, but for friends who "looked out for her," she must sometimes have been in "sore straits," as she said, for her own apparel.

It is not of the son, but of the mother, I would tell you, yet the two lives were so interwoven, so lovingly united in all the years of my acquaintance with her, I can scarce separate them, or tell of the one without much mention of the other.

Though she was for such long years a public character, living before the scenes, known and loved of many, it was with her as with all true women, in the home that she was best known, best loved. Here it was that I found her, and here it is that I love best to think of her—a rare, strong woman, with her earthly pilgrimage nearly done, ripening for eternal life. Though I knew but the one son then, she told me of others, saying proudly, "I had four as noble sons and one as lovely daughter as were ever given a woman"—making no distinction between her own two sons and her stepchildren. Right here I want to speak of what I have somewhere read about her saying that she "really believed" her husband (who died two years before the war began) would have lived longer if he had not "worn himself out trying to boss her"—that "he wanted her to do everything his way" and the like. I cannot believe this. I have heard her

speak of her husband many times, but never in any but terms of love and praise. She gave me always to understand that her married life was happy and satisfying. Had it been otherwise would she have felt such longing that her grave should be by the side of his? Would one of her last expressed wishes have been that this should be? No! no! it could not be true! Else had her voice never had such proud, tender tones when she said "my husband." Hers were not the memories of a wife who was "bossed," but instead those of one who knew the joys of a true marriage—a loving companionship one with the other. Of all the children but one son is still on earth—of him we shall hear more later.

I had known Mother Bickerdyke by report for many years, my first definite knowledge of her being gained from two sketches that told of her life and her work in the army, published in Arthur's Home Magazine, in 1879, I think it was. Being only a little girl away back among the hills of Chautauqua County, New York, during the war I had known nothing of her then. Later, after coming to Kansas to live, I had gazed with reverent admiration at her as she sat upon the platform among the "good and great"—with none better or greater than she was—at soldiers' reunions and at Decoration Day exercises. I had worshiped at her shrine from afar for years, but it was not until New Year's day 1891 that I met her face to face, and felt the clasp of her honest hand. She was living then with her son at Russell, our county seat. I had gone in from the ranch to spend a few days there with a friend. The two homes were near together and my friend was a close friend of Mother Bickerdyke's. It was a warm, beautiful morning and I, with a light shawl thrown over my head, was out in the yard enjoying the sunshine and the balmy air. My friend, coming to the door and seeing me there, called out, "Why don't you run over and say 'Happy New Year' to Mother Bickerdyke?"

"Just as I am?" I asked, woman-like, thinking first of my unceremonious dress. "Oh, yes; she will like you better so than she would if you were more formal," was the reply, and a moment later I was knocking at the door at which no one ever knocked in vain. It was opened by the dear old mother herself, who, upon mention of my name, graciously told me she had often heard of me through our many mutual friends. With my hand still held in hers she drew me through the hall and into her plainly furnished but cosy and home-like sitting room, and soon we were visiting as earnest women ever do visit one with the other. I noticed then, as at each subsequent meeting with her, how instantly I felt at ease in her presence; there was a certain graciousness and kindness of manner in all she said and did that forbade any embarrassing thought of difference in age, rank or condition. Though my heart and mind were full with the memory of all she was—of the work she had done and was still doing—and I felt a great reverence for her, she would not then or ever allow it to hinder the free interchange of thought and speech. It was the woman—the mother—who met me, not the noted public worker—and the woman within me responded easily, naturally, to her touch. The mention of my two noble brothers, who fell upon the battlefields of Virginia, was a further "open sesame" to her heart, and when, at parting, she kissed me even as a mother might, I felt it was of them she thought—for them it was given, for her love for the soldier boys was almost greater than the love of a mother for her child. Always after, at meeting and at parting she kissed me. Whether she did this generally with others I do not know. I only know this tenderness never failed me, and the memory of it is a blessing to me now—a sacrament that helps to keep my "lips from speaking guile" and consecrates them to truth and purity.

It was a happy hour I spent with her then. Though many visits came afterwards none were ever quite like this. It was one of the "blessed first times," of which

Holland used to tell us, never to be quite duplicated. What did we talk about? you ask. What did we not talk about! Of life and love, of home and war, of the work she had done—of which she spoke unreservedly when once the subject was introduced, but she did not introduce it, and spoke of it always as if any woman could have done the same if so minded, and under like circumstances. I had heard that she was writing her life-story and asked about it. "Bless you no! I'm not writing it at all. There's been plenty written about me now. I have no time to write a book, and if I had, I shouldn't do it. I've too good an opinion of human nature to believe folks want to waste time reading what I could write," and she laughed in that hearty way that brought always an answering laugh from the one hearing it. "What I have done," she continued, "I have done. It doesn't need to be written up. My boys (as she always called the soldiers) know what I have done, and that's enough."

But it is not "enough." All the world should know of her brave, untiring work, of her self-sacrifice so complete as to be almost self-effacement; of the long, weary marches she followed, and how like a good angel she appeared in camp and hospital and upon the field of battle; an angel of mercy to the suffering, but an angel of accusation and of wrath to those who would in any way impose upon her charges or hinder her with too much official red tape. This red tape she cut with determined hand, and went resolutely on with her work of giving comfort to the sick and bringing order and thrift where before had been disorder and, as she styled it, "dilly-dallying" with which she had no patience. She was a law unto herself "with a commission from God," as she said with reverence. Though never lacking in womanly tenderness where tenderness would avail she had a resolution and a determination that would not brook defeat—to her there was no such word as fail—no looking weakly back when once she had set her hand to the plow and made up her mind a given thing should be done.

That the soldiers felt her tenderness is proved by the name—Mother—they gave her. Indeed she was Mother Bickerdyke to us all—to soldier and civilian, to men, women and children alike. She prized this dear name as she did no other. It was the brightest gem in her crown of womanhood.

With her at the time of my first call was an unfortunate feeble-minded little daughter of an old soldier who lived some twenty or more miles out in the country. There Mother Bickerdyke had found her and bringing her to her own home was busily at work with preparations to send her to a school for such as she was. She introduced the child to me as "Our Flora," telling me at the same time "She is a good little girl, and very fond of music. She has some strong points. I think, under the right conditions, she will grow to be a strong, good woman, and I am going to put her where she will have a chance." That was ever her way—to help each one to be placed "under right conditions" and "to have a chance." All she did was done in a spirit of good will and helpfulness. "I do not work for money," she told me. The thought that anything she did, any story told of her, should be coined into money was repulsive to her—this dear old mother who ever seemed

> "Lifted by something over life
> To power and service."

CHAPTER II.

SCHOOL DAYS AND AFTER.

"Rest is not quitting the busy career,
Rest is the fitting of self to one's sphere.
'Tis loving and serving the highest and best,
'Tis onward unswerving; and this is true rest."

Judged by this standard, Mother Bickerdyke had always "true rest," for in no other could we find a better "fitting of self to one's sphere." I used to think of the Bible words, "Thou art called to the kingdom for such a time as this," as I watched her and thought of the ceaseless activities of her life. I loved to hear her talk of her girlhood days "on the old Ball farm," back in Knox county, Ohio, where she lived the free, wholesome life of a country girl, with all of the animals on the farm for pets and companions. It was there she laid the strong foundations of physical being; there that she gathered up a rich store of thought and knowledge—living, as every true child of the country does live, close to the great throbbing heart of Nature—learning her secrets and drinking deep at her inexhaustible founts of health and wisdom. Here she dreamed her sweet girl dreams of life and love while

"The world was all before her where to choose,
Reason her guard and Providence her guide."

Here she began her school education in the log school-house with "puncheon seats" and "goose quill pens," with teachers who would undoubtedly find it hard to get the necessary certificates in these progressive days, but who laid great stress on the mastery of the "three R's"—"readin', 'ritin', and 'rithmetic"—with "spellin'" thrown in as a needed accomplishment, that might or might not prove useful in coming years. Mary Ball, as she was then, must have been a merry,

fun-loving girl, one who would have her share in all the "good times" around her, and yet we can never think of her as neglecting any chance for improvement, or failing in any duty that was hers, for, with all her love of fun and merriment, her heart and conscience were true and tender ever. And her strong sense of right and justice would keep her "up to the mark" always.

At comparatively an early age she entered Oberlin College—that blessed haven of learning for so many noble women of that time, open alike to the rich and the poor, to women as to men, to black as to white—as but few such institutions were at that time.

"There have been a great many lies told and written about me," Mrs. Bickerdyke said to me, but the only one I ever knew her really to resent and be distressed about was the one so generally circulated and believed among those who never met her, that she was an uneducated, illiterate woman—one to whom the world of books and of schools was unknown—or nearly so. Especially was she hurt that Mrs. Mary A. Livermore, in "My Story of the War," seemed so to depict her. "Mary Livermore knew better than that," she told me. "I can't understand why she wrote as she did"—and neither can any of us, though all who knew Mrs. Livermore, either by reputation and printed word, or personally, will surely acquit her of any intention to wrong one whom she held in such high esteem, and with whom she was a faithful co-worker in many a weary day of hospital service, and upon the field among the suffering "boys in blue," a woman of whom she wrote in a private letter dated at Melrose, Mass., June 1, 1886: "No woman during the war has equaled you in varied and needed and useful service to our sick and wounded soldiers." Mrs. Livermore is but one among several who, in writing of Mrs. Bickerdyke, gives the impression that she was uneducated. I remember that in the articles in Arthur's Home Magazine where I first read of her, she was spoken of as an illiterate woman who, after her widowhood, supported her family by taking in washing. No one who knew her would

doubt her willingness to do this or any other honest work had it been necessary, for she knew in very truth that all work was good if done in the right spirit. She knew

> "Who sweeps a room as to God's law
> Makes that and the action fine,"

and was fearless in doing whatever came to her hand to be done. But it was not necessary for her to bend over the wash tub, or to do any like work to support her family. And so far was she from illiteracy that she lacked but a few short weeks of graduating with honors at Oberlin. An epidemic of fever breaking out there sent her home just before the close of her college course, and her removal to another part of the state a little later prevented a return. But lacking all this, knowing nothing of schools or colleges, she must have been of cultured mind, educated in the best meaning of the word, for she learned of everything with which she came in contact—of nature and of life, of men, women and children—of the sun-rises and the sun-sets—of the coming and the going of the seasons. All was "grist" to her—all taught her of life and its meaning. Of an open mind, as of open hand —far seeing and receptive, she was ever learning, ever growing in depth and strength of character. But she knew of books and of the writers of books, and was at home in the drawing rooms of the educated and cultured as surely as in the hospital tent and the humble cottage of the poor. Some one has written of her "disregard of the king's English," but this is wronging her. There was a certain bluntness of speech in her, a disposition to avoid needless "frills and furbelows," as she would say, both in her conversation and in her dress—with no display of what "Hosea Biglow" styles "book froth"—no bombast or vulgarity, and certainly no "disregard" or violation of "the king's English." Her's was an active life, far removed from the quiet of books and meditation, but she loved good books and all that went to the making of a full well-rounded, well-informed character, and there was a great charm

in her conversation, a something that told of reserve force and depths untouched below. Though she gave freely of that that was within her, she did not exhaust herself or her theme. She was ever plain and direct of speech, simple and unassuming in bearing, unless when in combat with wrong, when she became a very Nemesis, pursuing the wrong doer with relentless force, nor rested until, so far as lay in her power, justice was done. She stood always bravely, unflinchingly for what she believed to be right, and, truly, her judgment was seldom at fault, and she was seldom vanquished. As she once told an hospital officer who was opposing some of her efforts for the comfort of her "boys," "You better not get into a row with me, for whenever anybody does one of us always goes to the wall—*and it is never me.*"

She

> "Knew the depth and knew the height,
> The bounds of darkness and of light;
> And he who these extremes has seen
> Must needs know all that lies between."

And this she did, this brave-hearted, resolute woman, to whom all around her instinctively turned in need and in sorrow, and for whom she had ever the right word of love and of encouragement. The clasp of her hand revealed her strength and determination, the sound of her voice gave inspiration and hope and the sight of her face so deeply stamped with the fine, tender yet strong lines of character, the eternal brooding motherhood that lay in the shining depth of her blue eyes—ah, who that has felt, heard and seen all this can forget it? Who but recalls it all with joy and gratitude now that she is away?

How little she could have thought in her school days of the work she was to do—the large place she was to fill in the hearts and homes of her countrymen and in our national history! Nor could she once have thought that she was to be a household saint, the mention of whose name would bring a fervent "God bless her" from thousands of grateful hearts. Yet she was a very

human saint, not one to be set upon a pedestal and worshiped from afar, but one sharing in our full humanity with all its joys and its sorrows, and whose experience had taught her how to be helpful in the experiences of others. That she was sometimes imposed upon did not deter her in her good work. She was one who would rather trust all and be sometimes deceived than to wound any one by doubting too much. She was quick to decide and to act. While others were vaguely wondering over some social need or problem, she had found a way and gone straight to the need with sure supply. Though her work was chiefly among the old soldiers and their families, she by no means confined herself to them, but gave and gave, and gave wherever there was need, gave not of her money alone, but still more lavishly of herself. She must have felt with Lowell "The gift without the giver is bare." She never wasted life in doubts or fears, but spent herself on the work before her, knowing this was the best preparation for the work that might be given in the future. She lived in the now—lived one day at a time, wisely and well. She had a noble scorn of all things mean and low, and yet a rare gift of separating the sin from the sinner and, while condemning the one, would help to save the other. As she once said, "Every miserable sinner that comes my way is sure of two friends —God and me." Who can tell how many a poor life has been saved from utter wreck, how many a discouraged, despondent one has been aroused and given a new and stronger hope—a firmer grasp on things both material and spiritual by this combination of "God and me?" Whatever one's faith in God may be there come times when only the human touch can help—when we must have that to keep fast hold upon the other—when God's love must be seen in human love. The coming of Mother Bickerdyke at such a time could not but mean life and hope and salvation. Only the opening of the great Book of Life can reveal the extent and helpfulness of her work. Her's was essen-

tially a gospel of work, a religion of deeds rather than of words. Browning's lines seem just to fit her character:

"One who never turned her back, but marched breast forward;
Never doubted clouds would break;
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph;
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

CHAPTER III.

THE SON'S LETTER.

"The world is all gates—all opportunities."—*Lowell.*

Those who look for a detailed history of Mother Bickerdyke in these papers—one that would follow her step by step through her many activities, through her army life, her work in the "slums" in both eastern and western cities ere slumming had become the "fad" it now is, when only those thoroughly in earnest and with the desire to brighten the submerged lives deeply implanted in their hearts would enter upon such work —will, I fear, be much disappointed. Abler pens than mine have already written such histories; I would only tell of her as I knew her, and give you such pictures of her life, such glimpses of the work she did as she gave me from time to time when I visited with her in her Russell home. In these visits she gave me vivid pictures indeed, but without the details and data necessary to the writing of history. There was a time when I expected to write her full story, so far as it could be told in words, taking it from her papers and letters and from her own lips, but one little circumstance and then another arose to prevent me and after a time, the thought seemed to grow distasteful to her. She said, "I have been before the public long enough—the interest in me cannot be what it once was, and any way, my boys know what I have done and will remember it and that's enough. All I ask now is to be let alone. Let me rest, for I am tired"—and the time and the opportunity passed by. Yet I cannot think she would object to these memories of mine, written out of my reverent love for her and my sincere desire that the world should know as much as possible a worker who was like no other of whom we have record. An angel of

mercy and an angel of wrath in one—a tender, true-hearted woman, lacking no womanly quality, no refinement, and yet strong and invincible of purpose as any man. A "Meg Merrilies" our editor called her, and yet she was a Dorothy Dix, too, with a heart that felt every throb of pain in another, and eyes as ready to weep in sympathy for sorrow as to flash fire over some crime committed. A hand that would wield the rod—if the rod was needed—and at the same time would "lead on gently" where gentleness would suffice—a strange unworldliness in some matters and yet with a deep knowledge of human nature, a great understanding of the wants and needs of humanity. One who won her way and accomplished her purpose everywhere loved, honored and reverenced by all who knew her—by those in high places, whose names are known "at the gates" of our national life, as by the poor pensioners on her bounty; welcomed to the beautiful homes of the wealthy as eagerly as to the humble home of the laborer; moving with easy grace in one as in the other and everywhere making her influence felt for good. Ah no! too much cannot be written of her. She cannot be too well known among us.

Perhaps here is as good a place as any to give you an extract from a private letter I recently received from her only surviving son, Hiram B. Bickerdyke, of Ericson, Montana, where he has an important position as mail contractor—a man so firm in his principles and convictions that, I have heard, he will employ no one who uses liquor or any intoxicating drink as a beverage—thus proving himself well worthy of his noble mother. It is with his full knowledge and consent that these papers are written. Under date of December 3, 1905, he writes me:

"As to my recollections of home life with mother I will say that the fact is we never had but one season of about six months of home life after the war of '61 and '65. Mother's charity and self-sacrifice were wider and greater than the public generally believed or knows. However, she was the grandest mother to her children, and no sacrifice was too great for them. What she did for them, as well as others, will never be

fully known. I was with mother during the winter of 1868, on a trip to Washington to secure governmental aid for the desolate settlers of Kansas, caused by the Indian raids of that year. I did not see her after that for six years, and then, in 1874, was with her from December of that year till March, 1876, and I have never seen her since. As long as mother had strength and energy to move and do she never would settle down—which she did in the latter eighties with my brother at Russell, Kan. It is a fact that mother was at home with Brother James longer than at any other time since 1861. I traveled with her, as before stated, and did most of her clerical work and saw much of her wonderful influence with the best people of that time, also her great executive ability, as there was no failure with anything she undertook. Everything must give way before her wonderful will. That she was always right has been well proven, however strange it seemed at the time. Her great simplicity and common sense overcame all obstacles however great, and the greater they were the more willing was she to undertake to overcome them—not for herself, but for others. It was by these traits she won the confidence of Grant, Sherman and Logan, and many others with whom she came in contact.

"*She never failed in anything but for herself.* For herself was never in existence—not in the smallest matter. I have never seen anything like it, and it is hard to make people understand that such did exist. Mother's work for others and her influence with the good people in making them give for others will never be known only by those who gave and assisted her in her work. The same influence was at work with all the famous and great military leaders during and after the war. I *know* this, for I was with her and *saw* and heard for my self. 'It is hard to get one to exceed his authority for the good of others,' they would say (those great generals and heads of departments), 'but we will do it, Mother Bickerdyke, for you *never fail,* and we know, from somewhere, you will make it all right'—and she did. I have often thought she was inspired, as she seemingly came up against some great wall, forbidding farther progress, but like a flash all seemed to move out of the way.

"As to mother's home life in her last days in Kansas I presume you are more fully acquainted with it than myself. I went down to Kansas upon receipt of the telegram telling of her illness, but did not arrive in time to attend the funeral. I live a long distance from railroads and telegraph stations and, for that reason, did not learn of her sickness in time to reach her before all was over—a fact that I deeply deplore. I am the only surviving son, as Brother James passed away last December, one year ago.

"Strange as it may seem to others, we never, as a family, had mother with us after the war. Her energy and life went to aid others. As she would bluntly tell me, 'Others need it

and you and *we don't,'* when I tried to prevail upon her to settle down, and largely for this reason I, like others, let her hold her way, for she was right.''

I deeply regret I had not talked more with Prof. James R. Bickerdyke concerning his home life with his mother, for he could have told me many little incidents that would have added much to the interest of my story, for he, more than any other, lived close to her in those last years, and knew of her inmost heart and purpose.

I know she was anxious that only the truth should be told of her, for she said to me once, "Whatever you do, tell them just the truth," and I answered, "I shall do so if you tell it true to me, for I shall tell the tale as 'tis told to me." In speaking of one who had written quite extensively of her some years before she said: "It is a case of great I and little me"—meaning the writer had aggrandized herself in her writing without really telling much of what Mrs. Bickerdyke had done. She did not like that the recording of her work should be used as a stairway to fame for another. She dealt honestly with all and would have honest dealing from all for herself. Nor did she forget those in her service —but was kind and good to them as to all others. One in particular I remember, a mulatto girl, or woman, who was her housekeeper and general factotum for many years, giving generously of the love of her heart as well as of the work of her hands to the good mother who did much in many ways for her. This girl had a longing to study music and what did Mother Bickerdyke do but send her down to Lindsborg, Kansas, a noted musical center, where she studied music to her heart's content. This woman's devotion to the family was so great that, even after Mother Bickerdyke was gone she remained to make a home for her son, where he might come for rest and recuperation whenever he had a little vacation from teaching and work among the schools. She would not press her claim for her wages when the son too was gone and the estate came to be settled, but let what was due her go "to help the soldier boys"—as nearly all that came into that family

went—and she, too, is worthy of mention among those who helped the good mother in her work of love. The world can never know how much of help and encouragement is given those who work in public by just such lowly helpers as Lydia, who kept the home fires bright and warm and, in many ways, had her part in the good that was done. Nor did Lydia think less of her mistress that she spoke her mind freely whenever the work did not go to suit her. She was expected to speak her mind always and she did so "without let or hindrance." We all knew just where she stood, just what she would do and what she expected others to do, and life with all of its stern realities—perhaps because of its stern realities as well as of its joys—was beautiful and good to her and through her—through the love and the help she gave—to others also. The "primal duties" were ever before her—shining clear and steadfast—in life's sky, and she went from service to service, from love to love, steadfast, earnest and true.

CHAPTER IV.

WORK AMONG THE SICK AND POOR.

David Starr Jordan tells us, "It is for us to express love in terms of human helpfulness" and none, it seems to me, ever did this more fully, more truly than did Mother Bickerdyke. She had a sure instinct for want and suffering that led her unerringly wherever there was need of woman's love and ministry. Others might stand back in fear, might shrink from scenes of want, carnage and suffering. but not she. She only went forward with open, ready hands, and strong, true heart. We used to wonder how it was that she knew of the need that was so far from her. How did she hear of cases of sickness and of want of which those nearer to the scene than she knew little or nothing? Did she wear spectacles of the "Titbottom" kind that revealed the real needs of all around her whether near or far? Sometimes it did indeed seem so, for nothing seemed to escape her; no case of need or of suffering seemed too far away for her to reach and reaching, help. In very truth she

"Lived in a house by the side of the road,"

and was a true "friend to man" always.

Away out on the prairies some twenty-five miles from her home in Russell, an old soldier was slowly dying from cancer and there we found the good mother, caring for him, dressing the loathsome sore with her own hands, and, in every way possible to her, making smoother his pathway to rest. Back and forth on the long ride she went, nor failed in her work until the soldier was "mustered out" of earthly service. It was when returning from one of these trips she stopped at our home. Her eyes grew tender as she looked out over the peaceful river valley, set in its strong frame of hills. "It is so like the old Ball farm back in Ohio

where I grew up," she said, and then she added with a sigh, for she was weary, weary, "if I could only stay here for days and rest how glad I would be." We urged her to do so, but no, "I have so much to do—so many to look after, I cannot stop," she said, and she soon went her way again.

Still farther from her home was another old soldier—one who had been a very brave scout during the war, but ere its close was stricken with a sickness that never left him though he lived until very recently. His disease was of such a nature that he lost nearly all control of his motions and, though a temperance man, he was often suspected of drunkenness, where he was not known, as he had every appearance of one under the influence of liquor. Towards the later part of his life he lost his mind and would often wander away from his miserable home and be gone for days at a time. His family, strangely enough, cared little what became of him, and gave little heed to his coming or going. Consequently they were objects of much "righteous indignation" on Mother Bickerdyke's part. A friend of mine who lived close by her in Russell, tells me that at one time some one of this poor man's family came to Mother Bickerdyke and told her he had wandered away and had not been seen for days. Full of wrath for such neglect she "staid not on the order of her going," but had the old black horse hitched to the buggy and accompanied by her son went at once in search of the old soldier. After a long, weary time they found him lying in some tall grass too sick and weak to move. They got him in the buggy and, supporting him in her strong arms, they drove back to Russell, where by due process of law he was declared insane and sent to the asylum at Topeka. Mother Bickerdyke was appointed his guardian and used often to go down to see him. On one of her visits she discovered that he sat the most of the time in a hard-bottomed chair, and as soon as she got home she went to work and though her hands were so badly crippled it was only with great effort that she could sew, she made a patchwork cushion for him to sit on and sent

it on to him. Some one from Russell who visited the asylum soon after the cushion was sent, was commissioned to see if "Comrade C——" was sitting on it. The report came back that he was not—did not have it in fact. The friend who tells me of this incident says: "The letter she dictated and I wrote back to the superintendent of the asylum was enough to make him quake," but, not content with writing, she went immediately to Topeka herself (a distance of two hundred miles) and we who knew her could imagine the scene when she confronted the delinquent official. All this that Comrade C—— might have a cushion to his chair, for needless to say, he had it after that as long as he lived. She counted nothing small or trivial that added to the comfort of her charges, and nothing within her power was too great, too difficult for her to do, so only that it was needed and helped in any way to make life easier or better for another. Her detestation of the way "Comrade C——'s" family treated him, their indifference to his condition—that was pitiful in the extreme—or to his comfort, so aroused her wrath that she begrudged every cent they received from his pension—which were not many while she had charge of it. As his guardian she used all that was needed of his funds for his comfort. Yet, we may be sure, no penny of it was wasted. Her army record, the washing of hospital blankets and stores, of the shirts taken from the backs of wounded soldiers—all tell of her thrift, her ability to save and make a little go a long ways. The lessons of economy learned in the pioneer days in the log huts of her forefathers were "born in her bones and bred in her flesh," she used to say, and she could not waste anything unless it was her own strength and life. Of these she gave without thought of withholding or of economy.

These incidents of her care and watchful oversight for her "boys in blue" are but a few of many that could be cited, for she was always at work in some way for them, and generally had one or more of the sick, "the lame, the halt and the blind" with her. I remember one poor soldier who had been under her care in some

hospital during the war, came all the way from San Francisco, and from a sister who lived there, and who would have cared for him, to Russell that he might spend the last weeks of his life with the "Soldiers' Mother," whom he with many others loved so dearly. He knew the end of his earthly way was very near and could not bear not to see Mother Bickerdyke once more and feel her gentle ministries. She took him into her home and cared for him as if he had been her very own and her face was the last that he saw ere he looked upon the angel faces. Her hand held his in its strong, comforting clasp; her voice sustained him as he "fell on sleep" to waken no more on earth. In her home the kindly people gathered for the last rites; from her home his body was borne by kind but stranger hands to its last resting place in earth's bosom, and on each recurring Decoration Day so long as she lived in Russell it was this dear old mother who placed on his grave the beautiful flowers sent from San Francisco for that purpose. And who shall say that the joys of heaven and heavenly rest are not sweeter and dearer to this man (and to many another who, like him, knew how good it was to feel her care) for all she did for him? Surely there could have been no "dark way" for him to cross while her hands held his, and her love gave him firm faith in the higher Love watching over all.

Like the "Drummer Boy of Kent" she could "never sound retreat" from duty or from service, and there seemed no room for thought of self in her mind. A friend who lived very near her in Russell told me of seeing her "drop exhausted in the street, with her basket on her arm, a morning or two after she returned from the National Reunion at Washington." This trip, though a great joy to her, had exhausted her very much. It was some time in the nineties (the old soldiers who may read this will probably remember the exact year though I do not) and she was growing old, yet knew it not, and was still unremitting and relentless in her demands on herself. She had had but little hope of going. Her son's work was such that

he could not go with her, and he could not think of letting her go unattended on so long a trip. Her lady friends had assured her that in case of a way opening for her to go, her wardrobe should be in readiness for instant packing, and when, "at the eleventh hour," word came from her soldier boys in the Solomon (Kansas) valley that a car had been chartered and no attention would be lacking, and they "could not take 'no' for an answer," the dear old lady was almost overcome with her joy and the sense of care and security. Her wardrobe was ready, as promised, but when she brought out her "grip" it was crowded so full of papers, documents and credentials that she must present at "Headquarters" to help her in the work she was planning to do, even at that advanced age, that there was barely room left for a handful of things for her comfort—so much did the needs of others outweigh her own needs always. She made the trip and enjoyed it to the utmost. She accomplished the work she hoped to do in Washington, and was so buoyed up with the joy and the success, with the glad meetings with so many of her "boys" that she did not realize how severely her strength and endurance were taxed, and upon her return home at once took up the duties she had dropped for a few days. It was her habit to make the rounds among the sick and poor of the town each morning with a great basket of good things upon her arm that she doled out according to the need of each one of her pensioners. But for once even her strong will was not strong enough to conquer, or set aside the weariness of the flesh, and she fell in the street and, for a time, she who had cared so untiringly for others, must herself be cared for, and never was there lack of loving friends who, gladly and gratefully gave service to her. She rested fast, recuperated quickly, and soon was up and doing in the old way.

CHAPTER V.

WITH HER AT HOME.

"I saw her upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman, too!
Her household motions light and free,
* * * * * * *
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet,
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food.
A perfect woman nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort and command."

How Wordsworth's beautiful tribute to woman comes back to me as out of the shadows of the years that are fled I recall Mother Bickerdyke as I saw her in her home. Not perfect in the sense of being immune from human faults and failures—we could not have loved her as we did—could not love her as we still do—had this been true, but yet most "nobly planned to warn, to comfort and command," with a something about her we could not resist—a something that called us to high belief and service. Was it the compelling power of her great love? the force of her deep, unshaken faith in humanity? How vividly her face and form come back to me as I sit writing of her! She was as plain in dress as in speech; "They try to fix me up and make me look stylish sometimes," she told me, "but," she added, "I don't like it. I don't want to think of my dress, there's too much else to think of and to do. I've no time for the making or the wearing of frills. It's what a woman does, not what she wears, that counts with me. I've no mind to be fashionable, anyway," and I hear yet the laugh with which she finished her remarks. And so it is that when I look at her photo, taken when some one had "fixed her up," another and a dearer picture of her comes to my mind. A picture in which her soft, white hair is drawn

smoothly back from her face and coiled low down on the back of her head, her dress, guiltless of collar or tie, unfastened at the throat and turned back to give her ample breathing room, her waist untrammeled by girdle or belt, her skirt short enough to be out of the way of her feet—never needing to be held up or thought of when she walked—in fact, the dress of a free woman who placed comfort before style, and to whom life was too busy and earnest, too filled with real things to have time or care for what she wore. Neat and tidy she always was, but unconventional and free. I called at her home informally at all hours—morning, noon or night—and this was the garb in which she oftenest greeted me. This was as I saw and knew her in the summer days. As winter came on she dressed warmer, as we all do, but always in a way to leave her the free use of every member. In more formal dress she wore soft folds of white lace about her neck, but no stiff collars, no fetters of any kind for her.

As I have said, there was no formality about my visits. Wherever in the house she happened to be busy at the time I called, whether in kitchen, bedroom or parlor, there she took me, there we talked and worked together for, unless my stay must be very short, she would let me take part in her work, and thus I felt that I did not hinder her in any way and staid longer than I would have done had it been otherwise. Once it was the time of canning peaches; she led me out into the kitchen where I found the dignified Professor Bickerdyke with one of his mother's ample aprons fastened about his waist helping Lydia pare peaches, while she attended to the cooking and the canning of them. "Jimmy had nothing to do this afternoon and these peaches needed taking care of right away, so I told him he might as well help us," she said. At my request, she gave me a pan of peaches and a knife and I, too, "helped," and what a social, merry time we had over our work! She kept urging me to "eat them—eat all you can—they're good for you." "Yes, eat them," said the Professor, "for what

you eat mother won't have to can. She is getting too tired anyway"—so mindful was he ever of her comfort.

Again I would find her busy overseeing the making of garments for some of her "poor folks," whom she had literally "always with her," or dictating letters to the girl who wrote for her, for owing to the effect of the blood poisoning she contracted while at work among the prisoners of Andersonville, her hands, all the later years of her life, were too stiff to guide a pen. Yet her letters, though written by another, came warm and true from her heart, and woe be to the girl who sought to change them in any way, or to make them different from her dictation! She would not stand any "meddling," as she called it, and "What I want written I want written," she would say. "You can write your own letters to suit yourself, but mine must be written to suit me, and if you can't do it some one else can." Yet, despite this strict "toeing of the mark" required of all who worked for her, those who were longest in her service loved her the best, for they found her as ready to praise as to blame, as quick to see a good intent as a fault. She never forgot the ties of our common humanity that bound her to the lowest and the weakest as surely as to the highest and the greatest. It is said "More love is needed to blame rightly than to praise." This love Mother Bickerdyke had in full measure "pressed down and overflowing." And not for the human family alone, but for the "little brothers in feathers and fur," for all the domestic animals as well. She thought of and planned for the comfort of all that came within her reach, and that reach extended far and wide.

I recall one amusing little incident connected with a moving day. The drayman had his load all ready for a start with Mother Bickerdyke comfortably seated in the front of the wagon. As he attempted to climb up to his seat on top of his load, his feet struck a large basket that he had not before seen. "What's that?" he asked, as he tried to make room for his feet beside

it. "That, sir, is my cat. If you don't want to ride with her, you can walk, for she isn't going to," came the quick reply from the good mother. Needless to say both man and cat rode in comfort from the old to the new home.

If a sick person was refractory and inclined to refuse necessary ministrations, it was Mother Bickerdyke who was appealed to to find a way to solve the problem. And solve it she did in ways alike vigorous and unique, as when Mrs. ——, an English lady of much refinement—was sick with fever. In her delirium she refused the bath ordered for her by the attending physician. The nurses tried by all gentle ways to override her sick fancies and carry out the doctor's orders, but in vain. At last they sent for Mrs. Bickerdyke. She came, she saw, she conquered. Stepping to the bedside with that resolute way so well known where she was known, she turned back the covers with a "Ha! ha! What's this? Won't have a bath, eh? Now you turn right over here and be bathed or *I will spank you.*" Even in her delirium the sick woman recognized the voice of authority and the invincible will with which she had to deal and obediently as a child she "turned over" and was bathed without protest or resistance. "Now, why couldn't she have done that for us?" questioned the nurses. It was but the difference in the women that all, whether sick or well, must feel. Mother Bickerdyke not only "spoke as one having authority," but also as one whose commands could not be disobeyed. She had faith in herself and in her cause—and this inspired others with a like faith. She did not expect to fail, therefore she did not fail. It was the sublime might of right—the power of truth invincible and unyielding ever, that, showing now and then in such lives as hers, gives us hope for the future and a promise of things to be when men and women generally claim their heritage as children of the Highest, and awake to the possibilities hid in our human nature. As her son has written "she was inspired"—but so may others be inspired if they will but live in harmony with the Divine and

draw their daily, hourly supply from the great founts of life and knowledge. She came of heroic stock. In her veins mingled the blood of statesmen, warriors and patriots, as well as of the scholar and the preacher, of men and women bred in the stern schools of want and necessity, of high faiths and of noble living. Who but one thus born could have done the work she did? Who but such as she could have brought order and comfort out of the disorder and confusion of camp and field hospitals, sustaining the courage of the wounded and the dying with songs and prayers, with "words fitly spoken," and deeds as fitly done, while shot and shell fell and exploded around her? To whom but to such as she would the soldier give the holy name of "Mother"—that name that is first on the lips of childhood entering life, and last on the lips of the dying as they slip out into the silence of eternity? Who but Mother Bickerdyke could have shaken and scolded our dear Senior Editor out of the apathy of fever and home-sickness as he lay "one of the helpless burdens of the hospital at Corinth," when he, "a mere baby of seventeen," as he told me, was slipping out of life from the mere lack of something to arouse and hold him? This something she furnished and to her, under God, undoubtedly we owe his life of love and service, of devotion to truth in the long years that lie between seventeen and sixty. And he is but one among hundreds, yea, thousands who have felt the healing touch of her hands and been aroused to life and love of life—to the gladness of service and duty by the beauty and depth of her gracious ministry.

CHAPTER VI.

STORIES OF ARMY LIFE.

"To thy duty now and ever!
Dream no more of rest or stay;
Give to Freedom's great endeavor
All thou art or hast today."

Such must have been the call that came to Mother Bickerdyke in those early days of war when first the heart-breaking stories of suffering, sickness and privation came back from the front where the brave boys in blue were offering their all at Freedom's shrine. She loved her home and her children as tenderly as mothers ever loved them. She had felt a double duty laid upon her for the care and guidance of her children since the death of her husband left her their only protector. She loved the quiet home and home life. It's "sweet, safe corners" were dear to her, as they are to all women, and she had planned her work there. But the winds of the South brought voices to her stronger even than the voices of her children, the hands of the sick and wounded, stretched out in mute appeal, drew her with irresistible force, and for them, that she might answer to their need, might bind up their wounds and give aid and comfort where it was so sorely needed, she put aside the clinging hands of her little ones and went resolutely forth to the larger duty—the greater need. But let no one think this was easy for her or belittle the sacrifice she made. Though she did not think of self, she did think of her children and what this breaking up of the home and mother's absence would mean to them. Their pleading cries rang in her ears, their hands clung to her as only childish hands can cling, but with a strength and heroism as grand as ever shown on the

battlefield she put them aside and turned southward. Once, when we were speaking of this, she said: "It was hard, very hard, to leave my home and children, but the way opened for me, the work seemed to come to me to be done, and God gave me strength to do it." Was it any wonder that, working in this spirit, she was indomitable? That she never met defeat and knew not failure? It was such sentences as these that gave me insight into her character and taught me unerringly of the great mother-heart that animated her. One of my friends once said to me of her: "She opens her heart to you as she seldom does to anyone," and she herself said the same. "It's so easy to tell you things," she said. Why, I do not know, I only know I came from her presence always with a feeling that I had walked on holy ground and had received a new baptism for life's duties and joys."

A nation's growth is measured by the heart-throbs of its people, by their heroic deeds, their achievements and aspirations, but still more truly by the lives of the common people, those whom Lincoln said "God must have loved or he would not have made so many of them"—and their

> "Plain truth to manhood
> And to God's supreme design."

Knowing this, I love to think what an uplift to home and national life was given by Mother Bickerdyke's life and by each one who lives and serves as she did. One life, though it be ever so true and beautiful, seems but as a tiny drop in the great ocean of life, and yet it has its mighty influence for all time—for eternity.

Mother Bickerdyke took responsibilities upon herself as freely as those of a different make would have shunned them. She never seemed happier than when work was piled about her "mountain high." This was a challenge to her to do her best, and she accepted it with cheerful courage and great good will, nor gave herself rest or pause until she had accomplished her purpose. Her mind moved quickly and its grasp seemed almost marvelous at times. It was as if she

saw the end from the beginning and felt the thing that should be ever beating beneath the thing that was. Her comprehension of a situation was instant. She saw at once what was lacking and the way to supply it. She aimed high; realizing

"Not failure, but low aim is crime"—

and went straight and true to her mark. She did not overestimate her ability, but knew herself even as she knew others, and was as relentless and exacting of self as of others always. Her sympathy and help enlisted in any movement was at once a pledge and a promise of success. Her strong word went out over the deep waters of life and did not return unto her void. Her sublime faith in the right and the conquering might of right lay back of every act and lent to its success. Self was lost in the work before her, or how could she have done what she did? How else could she have gone into the pestilential hospitals at Fort Pickering, where the dread scourge of smallpox raged unchecked and the conditions had become so bad that no other help could be obtained? She did not hesitate for one moment, though, as Mrs. Livermore tells us, the place had become "fouler and more noisome than an Augean stable. But Mother Bickerdyke was just the Hercules to cleanse it. She raised such a storm about the ears of the officials whose neglect had caused its terrible condition as took the heads off of some of them." Though her time and her strength had seemed fully occupied before, she added this one more thing and went to the loathsome place with the same cheerfulness, the same undaunted courage that sustained her elsewhere. Surely the good angels must have shielded her—knowing our need of her and the great work still awaiting her doing.

Her reminiscent talk of her army life and work was always very entertaining. Though the boys in blue were her first care, she cared also for the boys in gray when they came in her way. The leaders in the rebellion—the "hot-heads" on either side who were quick to make occasion for war—she denounced, but

never the private soldiers. Of the "rank and file" in the southern army she said, "They fought from duty and a love of home; for what seemed to them true patriotism, just as our boys did, and they needed the same care when they were sick and wounded. I could not pass them by unheeded." So the great mother-heart went out to them and her hands were ready in service to them also. She told interesting stories of the southern women who sometimes came into camp in quest of a relative or friend. One such, born and bred in luxury, with all her environment so different from that of a nothern woman that she could not imagine a lady would work as she saw Mother Bickerdyke working, was very haughty and could scarce bear to speak to the plain "Yankee woman," who, in telling me the story, said: "I was getting dinner for some of my sick boys. I knew this woman was hungry—as so many of the brave southern women were in those days—and I fixed some food on a tray and offered it to her. She drew herself up haughtily, disdaining to touch food prepared by a 'Yankee.' 'Very well, madame,' I said, 'but there it is; you can eat it or let it alone as you please. And, putting the tray down, I went on with my work. She had come to see her son, who, badly wounded, had been picked up and brought in with a lot of other poor fellows. Later, when she found I had cared for him just as I did for the others, her pride and haughtiness gave way and she was the mother only. With tears running down her cheeks she came back to me, begging me to forgive her—poor soul! I'd nothing to forgive. I knew all about it. She thanked me over and over again, asked me if she might kiss me, and said, 'I did not know northern women were like you.' A little later she asked me for the food she had at first refused. 'I do want it,' she said, 'for I am hungry—hungry.' She came often to camp after that and we became good friends. I was almost as glad as she was when her boy was nicely convalescent and she could take him home with her. There were, of course, some subjects, of which we did not

speak. Why should we speak of them? She was a southern woman and I a 'Yankee.' We could not see nor think alike. It is better to 'agree to disagree' in such cases I think."

This woman is but one of many southern women who had reason to thank the good old mother for her care of sons, husbands, fathers or brothers who were dear to them. It was the sufferer she served—not the northern or the southern man. If, after the pain had passed, she "spoke her mind" and tried to make those who listened to her feel the imperative need that there should be but one flag and one country, that North and South, though so different in their needs and resources, should be as true brothers—living in a spirit of loving kindness one with the other, that the blessed boon of liberty was for all alike—a gift of Nature and of Nature's God, that none might take away—if she taught them—the northern boy alike with the southern boy—that their heredity from God was great enough, and strong enough to overcome and make right whatever was wrong in their earthly inheritance, it was only because she was true to the best that was in her and would help all with whom her lines were cast to "gird on the full armor of manhood" and battle for the right —for the truth that is greater than country, transcending race or creed. Her's was akin to the Puritan conscience that must "bear witness for truth" at all times and in all places alike, yet so timely were her words, so pure her motive that she did not often give offense and neither did she speak in vain. I say her's was akin to the Puritan conscience, indeed it was a part of her inheritance. Her great-great-grandfather, on her mother's side, came over in the "Mayflower," while, on her father's side, was "the beautiful Mary Ball," mother of George Washington in direct line of descent. Many of her ancestors did valiant duty in the struggle for independence, and had their full share in the hardships and vicissitudes of the new country. Knowing this, remembering the sturdy strength and independence of the men and women of those days, helps us to understand Mrs. Bickerdyke's

character and to know why she could not "beat retreat." It was these qualities of heart and brain, descending through the long line of noble men and fair women, that helped to keep her

> —"forever up
> To the heroic level of the old time,"

and the grander heights of the new day, in which she had so great a part.

CHAPTER VII.

STORIES OF SERVICE.

"The day's sharp strife is ended now,
Our work is done, God knoweth how."

"I am their mother; who shall bar me from them?" We can hardly imagine a time when the soldiers and their friends—and who is not the friend of the gallant "boys in blue?"—will lose interest in the telling of the stories connected with Mother Bickerdyke's army work. If it be true that "all the world loves a lover," it is no less true that "all the world loves" and admires a woman who with a heroic devotion to duty combines the tenderness and love of a mother and is the embodiment of faithful, affectionate service where service is most needed.

In speaking of Mrs. Bickerdyke's work in the smallpox hospital, two miles down the river from Memphis, Mrs. Livermore says of her: "She was ready to arouse a moral earthquake, or let loose a small tornado of wrath whenever she discovered any cruelty or unkindness to the men, or any disorder or neglect, or uncleanness in the hospital or about the premises." Mrs. Hoge, in writing of her in "Boys in Blue," recognizes the same heroic qualities. She speaks of the "hospitals rank with disease and death, foul with festering and unwashed wounds and unclean garments," places where "inexperienced surgeons stood aghast and felt almost powerless to cleanse and purify." She compares these hospitals to the great prairies of the West, where "ordinary methods and machinery would fail, and the successful farmer falls back on the great prairie plow, drawn by half a score of oxen." She speaks of the times when only the thunderbolts can scatter the pes-

tilence and says "the prairie plow and the thunderbolt were needed in these hospitals as on the prairie, and they came in the person of Mother Bickerdyke. A pythoness if her precious boys were assailed, she was gentle and tender as a loving mother to every sick or wounded soldier. Woe to the man, no matter what his rank, who trampled on the rights of her 'boys in blue.' Faithful surgeons praised her and relied upon her skill, strength and tenderness. Those who were the reverse cursed her and clamored for her removal." Mrs. Hoge also tells of an Ohio colonel who boasted that Mother Bickerdyke "saved his life after a severe amputation and treated him as well as a private even after she was told he was an officer." "And a major general told me with glistening eyes she had saved his life at Corinth. He had a terrific congestive chill, was laboring for breath, unrelieved by medicine, when he sent for her (Mother Bickerdyke) as a last resort, knowing her unwillingness to leave the privates—the men who so much needed her service. 'General,' she said, 'you must have a bath.' 'A bath,' he gasped, 'that's impossible; there's no water within four miles.' 'Never you mind,' she said, 'I'll get it.' That was enough for the general, and he waited. In fifteen minutes she appeared with two soldiers carrying a huge tub of steaming water. 'Now, boys,' she said, 'strip the General, put him in the tub, cover him close with a blanket, and I will give him a drink.' Her orders were promptly obeyed. She gave him a glass of hot toddy, then had him rubbed with dry, warm cloths till circulation was restored, placed him in bed, surrounded with hot bricks, and 'Richard was himself again.'" In telling of this incident Mrs. Bickerdyke would add, with a laugh, "And he didn't know that I afterwards bathed sixteen tired, dirty, half-sick boys in the same water, adding a little fresh hot water each time, as all the water for the hospitals was hauled four miles. Though this was not hygienic, nor according to Mrs. Bickerdyke's ideas

of the fitness of things, it was the best she could do under the circumstances—proof of how she would always "find a way or make one"—and surely better than no bath in the dire need. Mrs. Hoge says: "She seemed to be an individual mother to each man. We may think how deeply her heart was wrung with pity and sorrow and how, because of it, she would throw herself into the work of caring for those remaining with redoubled energy and freshly consecrated spirit and love." It is as an "individual mother" each soldier who was under her care thinks of her now. It is as such that he pictures her to his children, and he never wonders that they ask him, "Is she our grandma, too?"

Mrs. Livermore says her only purpose during those trying seasons was beautifully expressed in her own simple words: "I kept doing something all the time to make the men better and to help them get well." All who knew her recognized that hers was a sympathy and a love that must be expressed in action. To do "something to help" was not only a necessity to her, but it was her only relief when in the midst of such terrible suffering and carnage as she was obliged to witness. It was this ability to throw herself, her sympathies and her heart—her all—into her work and find relief thereby that sustained her and gave her strength and courage to stand to her post when others no less willing or tender but less fortunately, less fittingly, endowed, faltered and fell.

Mrs. Livermore in her "My Story of the War" tells us how "a mother kneeling by the cot of her son, who was scarcely seventeen years old, said: 'It is no wonder that you are called mother here, for you treat all these men with such kindness and patience. I owe to you the preservation of my darling's life. Oh, it would have broken my heart had I found him dead.' With that thought she burst into a passion of tears and buried her face in his pillow. He soothed her silver hair with one hand (he had lost the other) and tried to comfort her. Such scenes aroused feel-

ings in the heart of Mother Bickerdyke for which she could find no expression save in work."

Continuing her story of this noble woman, Mrs. Livermore says: "One of her best known acts is an interference that earned for her the title of 'General.' It was at the time when the Confederates attempted to recapture Corinth and attacked the defenses on October 3, 1862. The hospital work was so well arranged, or organized, that it could be done very quickly, and Mrs. Bickerdyke found time to study the progress of the battle. Towards evening she saw a brigade hurrying forward and learned that they had marched since noon and were about to join in the struggle. The officer in command was requested to let them rest a few minutes, but refused. The men were passing the hospital when a strong voice cried 'Halt!' Instinctively they obeyed, and attendants began to distribute soup and coffee. Meanwhile their canteens were filled and each man received a loaf of bread. 'Forward! March!' came the order in a very few minutes, the time lost being more than compensated by the renewed courage of the men, who had no other chance to rest until midnight. Mrs. Bickerdyke had given the order to 'halt' herself when she found no one else would do it, and her 'interference' was deeply appreciated, for in spite of all efforts many died from hunger and cold during that battle.

"Though Mrs. Bickerdyke was always neat and cleanly in her dress, she was indifferent to its attractions, and amid the flying sparks from open fires her calico dress would often take fire and was often full of little holes. Someone asked her if she were not afraid of being burnt. 'Oh,' she replied, 'my boys put me out!' 'They are all the time putting me out,' she said afterwards, 'and a dozen of 'em were grabbing me whenever I was cooking by the log fire, for the fire would snap and my clothes would catch, but I couldn't tell where.'"

Mrs. Livermore tells us of an officer who said of

Mother Bickerdyke: "That homely figure, clad in calico, drapped in a shawl and surmounted by the 'shaker bonnet,' is more to this army than the Madonna to a Catholic." We who have witnessed the homage paid her by the soldiers of the West can easily believe this. And not the soldier alone, but all with whom she came in contact felt the innate motherliness, the goodness and reliability of her character. So we do not wonder that Mrs. Livermore's Norwegian maid, Martha (during the war, when the Livermore home in Chicago was the headquarters for the nurses sent out by the Sanitary Commission), announced the coming of Mrs. Bickerdyke thus to her mistress, just returned from some errand downtown: "Another one of them nurse women have come with some carpet-bag," said Martha. "This one," she added, "have no afraid to do anything, and have make herself to take a bath, and have put herself to bed till supper time. She say she have very many hundred miles rode, and very many all shot-up soldiers to take care of, and she be got awful tired, and, poor woman, she look *seek* (sick). But she make me to think of my poor mother, what make herself to die in Norway with so much work too hard, before to this country I came. I like this nurse woman what have come more than the rest that stayed away." So surely did the great heart make itself felt by all. Of the stories Mrs. Livermore tells of Mother Bickerdyke none are more characteristic than the one of how she induced General Sherman to change an order he had issued "absolutely forbidding agents of sanitary supplies or agents of any description, to go over the road from Nashville to Chattanooga. He alleged as the reason for this prohibition that he wished the entire ability of the railroad devoted to strictly active military operations. Mrs. Bickerdyke (just returnning from a trip to the North, where, to use her own expression, she had stirred up the people and the aid societies to give "as with a big spoon") found Nashville full of worried agents and of sanitary stores

that were needed down the road and spoiling for lack of transportation. Her pass from General Grant would take her to Chattanooga despite General Sherman's prohibition. Before starting her fertility of invention manifested itself in a characteristic act. Ambulances with mules in harness were being sent to various points against the day of need. No barrels were allowed in these ambulances, but all the bags that could be crowded in. Getting such help as she could muster they made bags that were filled with such articles as could be sent in them as well as in barrels, and the ambulances went away packed with articles for the hospitals. Forty such left for Huntsville, Ala., thirty for Bridgeport, and several for other points. Then Mother Bickerdyke, despite remonstrance and opposition, took the next train for Chattanooga and made her unexpected debut at General Sherman's headquarters.

"Halloo! Why, how did you get down here?" asked one of the General's staff officers as he saw her enter Sherman's headquarters.

"Came down in the cars, of course. There's no other way of getting down here that I know of," replied the matter-of-fact woman. "I want to see General Sherman."

"He's in there writing," said the officer, pointing to an inner room, "but I guess he won't see you."

"I guess he will!" and she pushed into the apartment.

"Good morning, General! I want to speak to you a moment. May I come in?"

"I should think you had got in!" answered the General, barely looking up, in great annoyance. "What's up now?"

"Why, General," said the earnest matron, in a perfect torrent of words, "we can't stand this last order of yours, nohow. You'll have to change it, as sure as you live. We can get along without any more nurses and agents, but the supplies we *must* have. The sick and wounded men need them, and you'll

have to give permission to bring them down. The fact is, General, after a man is unable to carry a gun and drops out of line, you don't trouble yourself about him, but turn him over to the hospitals, expecting the doctors and nurses to get him well and put him back into the service as soon as possible. But how are we going to make bricks without straw? Tell me that, if you can."

"Well, I'm busy today, and cannot attend to you. I'll see you some other time."

But though Sherman kept on writing, Mother Bickerdyke saw a smile lurking in the corner of his mouth and knew she would carry her point, so she persisted. "No, General, don't send me away until you've fixed this thing as it ought to be fixed. You had me assigned to your corps and told me that you expected me to look after the nursing of the men who needed it. But I should like to know how I can do this if I don't have anything to work with? Have some sense about it now, General."

There was a hearty laugh at this and a little badinage ensued, which Mrs. Bickerdyke ended in her brusque way with, "Well, I can't stand fooling here all day. Now, General, write an order for two cars a day to be sent down from the Sanitary Commission at Nashville and I'll be satisfied."

The order was written, and for weeks all the sanitary stores from Nashville to Chattanooga and the posts along the road were sent directly or indirectly through this mediation of Mother Bickerdyke. Think what this meant to the army there, of the lives saved, the dear ones restored to their homes and families because of it, and thank God that Mother Bickerdyke had the courage to stand firm and demand that the right be done when such action was necessary. Is it to be wondered at that, to quote again from Mrs. Livermore, "In old New England homesteads, in the sunny valleys of California, or on the Western prairies, wherever the soldiers have made their homes, the name of Mother Bickerdyke will be spoken with rev-

erential love until her 'boys' are mustered out and their tongues are silent in death?" In no place will this be more true than here in Kansas, where so many homes are due to her untiring care and watchful love.

Some years after the close of the war Miss Mary A. Holland, herself an army nurse and at times a co-worker with Mrs. Bickerdyke, published a book called "Our Army Nurses," in which she gave the names and a more or less extended account of the work of a great many of that noble army of women who followed the soldiers from camp to camp, from battlefield to battlefield, doing everywhere all that could be done to alleviate the horrors of war. Speaking of these nurses in a private letter to Mrs. Bickerdyke, that it was my privilege to read, Miss Holland said: "We all did all we could, but you exceeded us all. Not one of us could come up to your bonnet strings." She devotes a number of pages of her book to Mrs. Bickerdyke and the work she did, and with the rest gives this description of the battle at Missionary Ridge in Mother Bickerdyke's own words: "The night before the battle was bright moonlight and all night long the troops marched to their position. In the morning they presented a solid wall of blue. Never were men more hopeful, and yet it looked so terrible, so appalling, that dangerous route up the rough and jagged mountainside. I was in the second story of the hotel. My duty was to receive the gifts from the soldiers to their friends if, to use their own expression, they 'bit the dust.' These gifts consisted of farewell letters, watches, money, and any little things they wanted to send 'home' if they never returned. The order to march was given between eleven and twelve o'clock. Amid the roar and din of shot and shell and the commands of the officers, it was almost impossible to distinguish any particular sound. Yet General Osterhaus' thrilling commands could be heard with startling distinctness. It was his artillery that sent the first shell through General Bragg's headquarters. The men marched up that stony precipice so rapidly that

even the officers were amazed. General Grant asked, "Who gave that command?" General Thomas replied, "They gave it themselves." In one short hour that desperate battle was fought and won. General Bragg was in full retreat and his army closely pursued. Was not the God of Battles there? The Stars and Stripes floated from one end of Missionary Ridge to the other. Seventeen hundred men were killed and wounded in the Fifteenth Army Corps alone."

As this was the corps that she regarded as belonging to her more than any other, each boy being her boy in a deep and tender sense, it is easy to conceive that her great heart was deeply wrung with anguish and pity.

Miss Holland tells us that at Fort Donelson, "many of the wounded of the Southern army, who had been deserted, were the recipients of her (Mother Bickerdyke's) care. As a mangled arm was being dressed for one of these men he felt instinctively the deep sympathy for his suffering, and said, 'That arm would not have done such service if I had known what sort of people I was fighting.' This must have been the thought of many a gray-clad hero who felt her tender ministry."

Continuing her story, Miss Holland says: "One night Mother Bickerdyke was making her usual round of the ward. The lights were turned down and many of the soldiers were sleeping, while here and there a restless sufferer counted the lagging seconds and longed for morning. Passing along she ministered to each one as the occasion demanded, until one asked, 'Are you not tired, Mother Bickerdyke?' Not for a moment did she think of claiming sympathy, but replied in her usual brisk way, 'What if I am? That is nothing. I am well and strong, and all I want is to see you so, too.' In a few moments more she was at her place by the table to assist the surgeon in an amputation, then received the patient into her own care. As she gave him a restorative he whispered, 'Take a message from me to my poor family. I shall surely

die.' How her heart ached for him in his weakness and suffering! But there was no change in her calm, cheerful manner; no trembling of her hopeful voice, as she replied, 'Now, do not talk. You are going to take all your messages to them yourself, for I know you have a splendid chance to get well.' "

How many thus upborne by her brave heart, sustained by her courage when they were too weak and sick to have courage for themselves, rallied and went back to health and duty we shall never know, at least not in earth-life. For her—as one day for us—the records must be opened now and she must be learning ever more and more of the grand work she did, and how glad, how grateful she must be that all this was permitted unto her!

Recently a friend wrote to tell me of how the life of a dear soldier brother was saved through Mother Bickerdyke's care. She says: "I met her at Bunker Hill, at the celebration of her eightieth birthday, and tried to express our deep gratitude to her, but she stopped me with a "Hush, I only did my duty." Ah, but she gave a grand interpretation to that word duty and would have no undue praise for herself or for her work. The Persians have this proverb: "He wants no other rosary whose thread of life is strung with beads of love and thought." Had Mother Bickerdyke been the most devout Catholic this had been her all sufficient "rosary."

I have read the story of many army nurses and feel a great pride and gladness in the work they did, but so far as I can learn, Mother Bickerdyke was the only one of them all who was never "mustered out" until Death gave her her discharge. Though she was no longer needed in camp and field, she never gave up her service for the soldiers, but continued in active work and in tender sympathy for them to the very end of her earthly way. Thousands of soldiers' orphans were placed by her in good homes; thousands of widows provided for, while no one knows the number of soldiers who received pensions and just recog-

nition of service rendered through her unwearied efforts and resistless courage. Though the war with its horrible carnage ended, there was no surcease of labor for her. With her wonderful insight she saw the needs of the discharged soldiers; saw what the change from the strict discipline of army life to the freedom of the civilian must mean to them, and seeing this, she saw, too, how best to help in each case. She was a self-appointed—or was it a God-appointed—Moses to lead the great army of discharged men to new lands of promise and inspire them with hopes of homes and plenty there. The vision granted her she made real to others. It is no wonder the "old boys" bless her; no wonder they love her. I have her statement that in the years from 1861 to 1865 over two millions of dollars' worth of sanitary supplies passed through her hands and, she said, "thousands and thousands of our brave soldiers were strengthened and saved by these supplies. We should have lost half our soldiers had it not been for the supplies sent by the Sanitary and Christian Commissions." But of the amount of money, of time and energy she spent in the years that intervened between the close of the war and her call to the Higher Life there is no computing. She said to a young friend of ours when she was in great sorrow: "If the Lord shuts one door he opens another. He has a work for you to do yet." For her there was always an open door—always a work to do—and most nobly, most lovingly, did she do it.

CHAPTER VIII.

STILL WITH THE ARMY.

"To do her honor! It is beautiful!" How my pen lingers over the pages and would make delay among the dear memories that come thronging back to me—but let me on to my story.

It was early in the memorable spring of 1861 that Mrs. Bickerdyke "enlisted for the war," though it was long after that that she was enrolled as a "regular"—and, even then, she drew no pay, but gave herself freely to the cause she had espoused.

Her first work was in the hospitals at Cairo, Illinois, where Miss Mary Safford was also at work, trying to make more comfortable the four hundred or more men who were sick there of fevers of various kinds, measles and other diseases, incidental to camp life.

Miss Safford, as we can well imagine, welcomed Mother Bickerdyke with great joy and gladness and they worked together through several months.

Though she had seen much of the dreaded effects of battles, the first one she really witnessed was at Fort Donelson, and here it was that she did what has been so often told in "song and story." It must be familiar to every one. Her voice would grow tender and a far-away look would come in her eyes when she spoke of it—as if again she was out under the midnight sky with her lantern, searching over that field still thickly strewn with the unburied dead, lest somewhere among them one still alive might have been overlooked. "Oh, those dead faces! those staring, sightless eyes that no tender hand had closed! Young boys who should have been at home with their mothers—men everywhere cut down in the pride and bloom of manhood—I can never forget it all—never shut it

away from my sight." It is known, too, that her brave search was rewarded by finding two young men yet alive, one of whom died soon after, but the other lived to return to his home in Dayton, Ohio. Think how he would tell the story there, and with what reverent love and gratitude those who loved him, and for whom she had saved him, would name her name! Think, too, in how many homes all over our beautiful land these scenes are duplicated—homes where she holds

"Such place in all men's thoughts that when they speak
Of great things done, or to be done, her name is ever on their lips."

At Fort Donelson she assisted in the removal of the wounded to the different hospitals along the river, and did valiant work among them. At Paducah, Mound City, Pittsburg Landing, Savannah (Tenn.), Farmington, Iuka, and Corinth, she went from hospital to hospital, laden always with "good things" for her "boys"—with material comforts of food and clothing, and the no less real if less material things that cheer and inspire the soul—words and deeds of love and mercy. Wherever she went order followed in her footsteps—disorder, inefficiency, wrong and injustice fled before her approach in ways that must seem no less than marvelous to those not understanding her character and resources.

Great quantities of "supplies," the making of which helped so much to relieve the weary months of waiting and anxiety for the women of the North, the loving but brave mothers, wives and daughters who waited and prayed at home while the fathers, husbands and brothers fought and fell on southern fields—were sent to her by sanitary commissions and other benevolent associations, supplies that she always put in the way of doing the greatest good to the greatest number possible, and that she gave out to the soldier-boys with many a cheering word of home and mother, thus giving them a greatly increased value and power for good. When these supplies ran short, as was sometimes inevitable she would get a great ambulance wagon, and,

with some convalescent soldier, or one detailed from the ranks for a driver, would go on long foraging expeditions into the surrounding country, returning laden with all manner of good things for the "inner man." The negroes everywhere were her friends and were glad and proud to give her fruits and vegetables from their "truck patches," and eggs, chickens, milk and butter from their storehouses. Her friends in the North sent her great boxes of clothing for her own use. She appreciated their kindness, but she kept only what she must have for herself, the rest she took with her when she went "foraging" and exchanged them for provisions for her boys.

It was not until in November, 1862, that she felt obliged to take a vacation. The constant work, the responsibilities and anxieties were beginning to tell heavily upon even her strong frame, and the longing for her children, for the sound of their voices and the touch of their hands—the desire to see lands and fields untouched by the awful devastation of war,—all this drew her irresistibly back, and leaving her hospital work in charge of faithful assistants, she returned with joy to her home. Let us not attempt to picture the meeting there nor seek to intrude upon her feelings as she clasped those so dear to her again in her motherly arms and heard their words of love and gladness and felt their caresses. She was the bearer of many messages and tokens from the soldiers to the home folks—some that brought joy and the hope of future meetings—others that made the tears fall fast—as trembling hands held the last gifts from a dear one whose earthly life was over. In private homes and in public meetings she told the story of the brave deeds being done in the camp and upon the battlefield, and urged the people to give generously for the comfort and the sustaining of those who were so bravely giving their all to their country's need. The people, grateful and appreciative for all she had done, would gladly have fêted her, but she wanted none of it. "I have done so little compared to what our boys are doing, don't make a fuss about it," she said with blunt

honesty so characteristic of her. And indeed it was not excitement and publicity she wanted then or ever, but a chance to rest and enjoy the quiet of her home with her children about her. She did many little services for them—repaired and replenished their clothing and, in so far as she could, prepared them for another separation from her. For she had no thought of "quitting the service." Her work and her experiences had made her almost invaluable at the front. She felt she was needed there, and again, in January, 1863, she said "good bye" to her own loved ones and turned her steps southward, beginning her work at Memphis with renewed vigor and zeal. Her sons were well cared for in the school where she had placed them, and she felt herself free to do her work.

It had always been difficult for her to get as much pure milk and as many fresh eggs as she wanted for hospital use, and as time passed, and the fortunes of war left fields untilled, dairies and poultry yards more and more uncared for, this difficulty increased, until, in desperation, Mrs. Bickerdyke determined to apply once again to the generous people of the North for help. Her plan for bringing a drove of cows and hens to camp was at first only laughed at, but this added to her determination, and finally permission was given her to "try it." She secured a twenty days' "furlough" and ere its expiration had made a trip up through Illinois and returned with about one hundred fine milch cows "warranted not to give chalk-and-water milk," and a thousand hens, each pledged to lay her "one egg a day for hospital use." They were cared for on an island near Memphis by the "contrabands." As the months passed and there was no lack of pure milk and fresh eggs, many were they who blessed Mrs. Bickerdyke for her foresight and the wisdom of her plan. When finally the hospitals were broken up because they were no longer needed, these herds and flocks were given to the faithful "contrabands" who had cared for them.

From Memphis Mrs. Bickerdyke went to Vicksburg, where there was greater need of her services, working

there and at Jackson through the long hot summer days, until, early in the fall General Sherman sent her North for rest and recuperation, but only for a short time, for when he with his troop reached Chattanooga, she joined them there. She had a great admiration for several of our great generals, but most of all for Sherman. She loved him, and, after the fall of Vicksburg, she considered herself as a part of his force and under his command, though he used laughingly to say she "outranked" him.

She was put in charge of the field hospital at Mission Ridge near Chattanooga, after that dreadful battle "above the clouds," in November, 1863, and, for over a month, was the only woman there. It is almost impossible to imagine the scene there where the wounded and the exhausted assigned to her care numbered over two thousand! What a fearful tax upon her strength and her sympathies! When I think of her here, recalling the mangled bodies, the faces distorted with pain, torn with shot and shell, the long, long lines of them dead, wounded and dying—I think of that passage in "Rab and His Friends," where, in telling of the young medical students who came in eager haste to watch the operation performed for poor little "Ailie's" relief, it says of them: "In them pity, as an *emotion,* ending in itself or at best in tears and a long drawn breath, lessens, while pity as a *motive* is quickened, and gains power and purpose." This must have been her experience. She had no time for tears nor for weak shrinking from the sight of suffering, so natural and common to woman. She must needs put all her energies into work, her eyes must be clear, her hands steady to assist in the operations that, though they semed most cruel and meant great pain then, were yet most kind, and would give relief in days to come. She must go here, there, and everywhere, helping, cheering and encouraging. One woman among over two thousand sufferers! One of weaker nature and of less sure control of self must have been appalled by the magnitude of the task, but not Mother Bicker-

dyke. Her strength arose to meet the need and she was a very host in the work she did. Hers was the

> "Insanity of noble minds
> That never falters or abates,
> But labors and endures and waits,
> Till all that it foresees it finds,
> Or what it cannot find—creates!"

But it told heavily upon her—the terrible scenes at Mission Ridge, the incessant work that lasted all through the rest of November, through December and into January, when she broke down so utterly that she was obliged to go home to rest and regain her strength. She used to say with a shudder as if again it was all before her: "I can never get those awful scenes out of my mind and sight. Sleeping or waking they are with me. I see the mangled bodies, shot and torn in every possible way, I hear the cries and groans. Oh, it is horrible! horrible!" Ah, yes, indeed it was "horrible," but her resolution bore her through whatever she undertook and she could endure any sight if only she might help to alleviate the suffering and make the condition more bearable. Her pity, her sympathy was expressed in action. There were no "tears, idle tears," for her.

Though she was so worn out with all she had endured, she recuperated quickly, and in March we find her again with Sherman and his army going on from Chattanooga to Huntsville, from Huntsville to Nashville, and then on over that terrible road to Resaca. Over steep mountains, through narrow passes and across streams and rivers she followed fearlessly—doing everywhere her good work—carrying cheer and comfort—wherever she went. Sometimes she would make a sudden "raid," as she called it, on the northern people for the vegetables and sanitary supplies always so much needed, but these "raids" gave her no rest, but were all a part of the work she had set herself to do. I laughed to hear her tell of her bread baking along the line of march, and must almost agree with the negroes that there was "magic in her hands," or how else did she make good, sweet bread under such ad-

verse circumstances? No wonder the soldiers said "Mother Bickerdyke could make bread on a mule's back"—or anywhere else. What memories of home those loaves of bread must have awakened in the soldier's breast and how good they must have tasted after living on "hard tack". and like army "delicacies."

From Resaca, after her work was done there, the line of march followed to Kingston, to Altoona, and on to Atlanta. She followed her leader through those long, hot summer days untiringly—merciless only to herself. Another brave, devoted woman went with her—Mrs. Eliza Porter—who long before had been named "the Angel of the Hospitals." The two women were very unlike in person and in methods of working, but both were alike devoted to the soldiers and eager to alleviate, as far as possible, the horrors of war, and they comforted and cheered each other through the long marches and in hospital service, and were much together and much attached one to the other.

It was at Atlanta that the beloved General McPherson fell, and Mother Bickerdyke must needs close his eyes for that last long sleep and send what comfort she could to his dear ones at home. She used to say laughingly that she "treated an officer just as well as a private—if he behaved as well." Shoulder straps, stars and bars meant little to her unless they represented true worth and gallant service. All this she found in General McPherson—he whom Sherman loved, and of whom he spoke so highly—and we can think how her hands lingered over his cold face, and how even as a mother might, she did what she could for him who no longer needed earthly services.

Mrs. Livermore tells us how, while Sherman and his brave troops marched on from "Atlanta to the Sea" Mrs. Bickerdyke again went North, again busying herself with the gathering up of supplies, as "Sherman had directed her to meet him when he reached the Atlantic coast and to bring to his troops all the supplies that could be gathered, and gave her orders for transportation, on his account, to any desired extent." So

perfect was his confidence in her, so sure was he that no privilege would be abused by her. As she was irresistible when in hospital wards, so, too, was she irresistible when she stood before an audience pleading the needs of the soldier boys who, far from home and its comforts, were battling bravely for the Union, enduring hardships and privations such as we can scarcely imagine now, that there might be "one country and one flag" for us all. The responses to her calls were ever quick and generous, and so it was that when at Philadelphia in December, 1864, word came to her that Sherman had reached the sea at Savannah, she was ready with a great boatload of provisions and other necessities to start southward once more. How her heart must have rejoiced when she heard later of that "Christmas gift" of the city of Savannah, with one hundred and fifty heavy guns and plenty of ammunition, and also about twenty-five thousand bales of cotton, which Sherman presented to President Lincoln! How thousands of hearts, both North and South, rejoiced and gave thanks to the "God of Battles" for this victory that we all knew meant so much towards the ending of the war! As Lincoln said in his reply to the dispatch from General Sherman announcing the presentation of this great gift, it brought "those who sat in darkness to see a great light"—the light of Peace—coming.

> "Not like a mourner bowed
> For honor lost and dear ones wasted,
> But proud to meet a people proud,
> With eyes that tell o' triumph tasted."

But there was yet much to do ere this day really came and in it all Mother Bickerdyke had her faithful share. It was while delayed at Wilmington, N. C., upon this trip to Savannah that she cared for the Andersonville prisoners, who had been brought there, and in doing this contracted the blood poisoning from which her hands never fully recovered, and which made it necessary for her to have much of her after writing done by others. But why attempt to follow her in detail farther? Others have done this work better than

I can do it now that her lips are silent. If in all this writing, I have not given you such understanding of her character as will make you know how surely she would pursue her chosen work until all was done that could be done by woman's hands and the army was disbanded, the soldiers gone to their homes to rest and, in time, to enter upon the gentler arts of peace, then indeed have I failed of my purpose and written in vain. But it was long after the cannons had ceased to roar and the guns were "stacked" before Mother Bickerdyke was mustered out with the last of the Illinois troops at Camp Butler, Springfield, Ill., in March, 1866. Up to that time she had found plenty to do in different hospitals, where sick and wounded soldiers yet lingered, and she did it all faithfully to the last.

Dear old Mother Bickerdyke! Though the war revealed to us and to the world the strength and nobility of our American women, both North and South, there was among them all but one Mother Bickerdyke! Though many did nobly, none excelled her—few, indeed, equaled her in her self-sacrificing heroism and courage, her patient endurance, her sustained efforts and ability, her true worth and modesty.

In the grand review ordered by the President of Sherman's and Meade's armies at Washington, May 23-24, 1865, she might have had a post of honor by Mrs. Sherman's side, but she would not take it. She rode into the city with the troops "mounted upon a glossy saddle horse and wearing a simple calico dress and a sun-bonnet," as Mrs. Chase tells us, but she dropped out of the ranks almost immediately, and began her usual work of giving aid and refreshment to the weary soldiers—of whom there were many. "I never considered myself ornamental or worth making a show of," she said, "but I can be useful and that's all I want." In speaking of the fact that the dress and bonnet she wore that day of the "grand review" were sold for one hundred dollars and kept as "relics" of the war, she said: "To think any one would give that for my old dress and bonnet! What did I do with the money? Why, I used it for 'my boys,' of course.

It didn't go far where the need was so great, but it helped, and I was glad of it."

She used to tell us, too, of seeing that beautiful flag message, "Hold the fort, for I am coming," flashed by General Sherman's orders from Kenesaw to Altoona, and how impressive it was. This was but one of the many "side lights" of her army life that remained always clear and vivid in her memory, and that she loved to recall as we sat in her cozy sitting room working and talking of the days that had passed and the scenes that, we hope, may never again be repeated in our beautiful land.

CHAPTER IX.

IN NEW YORK AND ELSEWHERE.

"Born to nurse,
And to soothe, and to solace, to help and to heal
The sick world that leans on her."

This was Mother Bickerdyke, and it is not to be wondered at that soon after she was mustered out, we find her serving as matron and mother in general to the inmates of the "Home of the Friendless" in Chicago, but though there were one hundred and fifty under her care in this home, the number seemed very few to her and the work all too small for her. As she said, "it was too much like working in a peck measure," and she must perforce have something more upon which to spend herself and her splendid resources. Chicago, like many another city of the North, was overrun with discharged soldiers who found it hard to settle to the quiet pursuits of peace, who missed alike the excitement and the discipline of the army life, and who needed some one to help them locate homes for their families. Their meager pay as private soldiers had been used up as fast as it was paid them, and now they found themselves sadly destitute, without money or work, and yet with families looking to them for support. What was more natural than that in such need they should turn to Mother Bickerdyke, the one who had helped them over so many hard places already, and was still as a rock of defense to them? They flocked to her with their stories of wants and needs, telling her now, as in the dark days of the war, of their hopes and ambitions—their desires. She solved the problem, as was to be expected. The broad prairies of Kansas, whose soil her farmers are wont to say is the "deepest and richest ever made," covered with tall grasses and beauti-

ful flowers, with fine rivers and streams flowing here and there through them, with natural resources so rich and varied that they are scarcely yet all known—these prairies stretched out inviting hands to the settlers and gave promise of homes to whoever was willing to work for them. Though Mrs. Bickerdyke had never then been in Kansas she had heard much of it and it seemed to her just the place for her boys, and in the summer of 1867 she took a little "leave of absence" from the home and went out to see for herself. What she saw pleased her greatly and, returning again to Chicago, she busied herself at once in finding ways and means for transporting some of the soldiers and their families there. As ever in answer to her appeals her wealthy friends came to her aid, generously "upholding her hands," and thus it was that during the next two years she aided over three hundred families to settle in Kansas upon soldiers' claims that in time grew into beautiful and prosperous homes. General Sherman was at that time in command of the soldiers stationed at Fort Riley, Kansas, and gave her much material aid and encouragement in her good work.

"Where the treasure is there will the heart be." Mrs. Bickerdyke's heart was with the soldiers in their brave efforts to build up homes in Kansas and she soon followed them there, taking with her her two sons. She started an eating house, that soon became known as "The Mother Bickerdyke Home," in Salina—then a frontier town of comparatively few inhabitants. But, while possessing all of the attributes of a successful home maker, and such executive ability as is very rarely found in a woman, and not excelled by men, there was yet something lacking in her financial management. Perhaps it was her too generous charities—the quick reaching for whatever money she might have on hand when a pitiful story was told her—or a case of destitution came to her knowledge. Perhaps she trusted too much and did not enforce the "pay-as-you-go" rule sufficiently. Just what it was I do not know, but for some reason this venture was

a failure in a business way—from a financial standpoint—and she gave it up in 1869 and went to New York to work under the direction of the City Board of Missions. Horace Greeley and many other eminent people, including Henry Ward Beecher and his wife, became her warm friends and aided her in many ways and here she spent four years, literally "going about doing good" about the "Master's business" as truly as Jesus was in his work along the Galileean shores and among the beautiful hills of Palestine. As with him the "maimed, the halt and the blind," the sick and the poor flocked about her, and she went in and out of their miserable homes with words of blessing and of healing ever upon her lips, and in her hands in place of Bibles and tracts she bore brushes and combs, soap and towels, knowing there could not be godliness without greater cleanliness and the sick bodies must needs be cured before the souls could be awakened to the need of spiritual things. Up and down the city streets, she went in and out the destitute homes for four long years, the while she said, "My heart yearned for the sweet breath of the prairies and my sons there." But not until she had done something near what she went to do would she turn back. Into the hospitals, within the dreadful walls of the Tombs, into Castle Garden, out to Blackwell's Island, here, there and everywhere, it almost seems, she went, with everywhere a trail of "God bless you," of gratitude and love following her. Now and then she would meet one of her boys in blue whose tender greeting and glad recall of services rendered in some southern hospital or upon the battlefield, was like balm to her heart. Those who sat in high places—as the world counts them—delighted to honor her. Vast sums of money were entrusted to her, to be used as she saw fit in her beautiful charities, and everywhere her worth and ability was recognized and honored. What wonder is it that she was invincible and unconquerable, that, as her son said, she "always succeeded" with such a wealth of love forever flowing around her? Upborne on the hearts of the people, strengthened and encouraged ever by their

faith and trust, by their ardent admiration and devotion, she could not fail.

There is no power equal to that of love—the united love of a people—and this Mother Bickerdyke had in fullest measure wherever she was known. This sustained her and gave her a power that seemed almost miraculous at times. It was while she was at work in New York in 1871 that the fire fiend raged in the Michigan forests and in Chicago. The bitter need of a stricken people cried aloud in her ears, and she went to them laden again with gifts of money and provisions furnished her by her wealthy friends. These she distributed with that sure instinct and wisdom that marked her work everywhere. After which she turned again to New York and her work there. In 1874 we find her again in Kansas, called back by the longing of her sons for a home and mother in that home—and by the strong desire of her own heart for a little time of rest and quiet. It is easy to think with what joy these sons—Hiram and James—welcomed her, and how gladly they set up their "household gods" in the little home on the prairie. But it could not last—there was always a need and a call for her elsewhere, always those whose claims upon her she felt were more imperative than that of the sons who "could wait" and get along without much that she felt bound to give to others.

There were Indian raids, grasshoppers and drouths for the people to contend with and to despoil them of what few comforts they had been able to gather about them, and in every need or crisis they cried out to Mother Bickerdyke for aid—or, not waiting for the cry, she felt the need and prepared to answer it. Again and again and yet again ten times over in the years 1874 and 1875 she made trips back to Illinois to solicit aid and bring supplies to those who were so bravely fighting against heavy odds and discouragement to make homes for those dear to them. Rumors of her brave efforts and untiring work reached away to Boston, and friends there sent funds to aid her. Hundreds of settlers were benefited, hundreds of

homes saved because of what she did, and the people of Kansas "arose and called her blessed." In the State Legislature a resolution was passed thanking her for all she had done and everywhere throughout the state her name was spoken with loving gratitude. All this was as balm to her spirit, yet it did not save her from weariness. She felt the need of complete rest and change and her thoughts turned with longing towards the balmy fields and sunny skies of California. There, as elsewhere, her "boys" were scattered, and they urged her to come to them. Her sons, too, were anxious for her and urged her to go and thus the next two years, 1876 and 1877, were spent in as near idleness as she ever permitted to herself. She traveled from place to place in California, she visited in the homes of the old soldiers there, she saw the big trees, the mountains, the beautiful, fertile valleys, she went with friends to Yellowstone Park, she rested everywhere and enjoyed everything, and gradually the bloom of health came again to her cheeks and the painful jangling of her nerves was stilled, and she longed again for some steady work.

CHAPTER X.

I have read somewhere of an old English parsonage that has deeply engraved over its portal a quaint Saxon legend

"Do Ye Nexte Thynge."

In my thought it seems connected with Mother Bickerdyke for she turned so quickly and so easily from one kind of work to another. The bright star of duty shone ever before her and she followed it faithfully.

Though she called these first two years in California a time of rest, she had by no means been idle. She found the poor and needy there as she had found them in the East and must be at work for them. There, too, were old soldiers who, though there was no question of their need or deserts, yet found much difficulty in getting the government to grant them pensions, and here Mother Bickerdyke gave great aid, helping many a poor man to secure a recognition of his claim and the granting of the pension he had so richly earned. This work once begun was never laid down until very shortly before her death, and many indeed were, and are still, the men who had cause to bless her for her timely aid. It was a work strictly to her liking, and she threw herself into it with the same zeal and enthusiasm, the same forgetfulness of self and her needs that she had shown in earlier days of army life. She sought through rec-

ords and muster rolls, she traveled untold miles in going from place to place wherever the evidence she sought for could be found, she interviewed state and national officials, urging everywhere the gospel of good sense and justice, pleading the great service rendered by the private soldier and his claim upon the people, in fact she did all that was possible to her that justice might be done and the government might prove its gratitude to those who had made it still possible that ours should be a "land of the free and the home of the brave." And not this alone. Besides her work for the soldier, she helped greatly in California and elsewhere to establish homes for the destitute widows and children of those who had fallen while doing a soldier's duty. True worth is ever modest and seeks to hide its needs away from the public gaze; but Mother Bickerdyke had a way of finding all such cases out and of putting them in a way to be cared for and cheered.

But while helping others to live she must herself live. She gave freely to others but scorned charity for herself. In order that she might be independent and self supporting she applied for a position in the government mint in San Francisco, and with several generals as "backers" had no difficulty in obtaining it, and here she spent several peaceful, happy years, with always her beautiful charities to fill in the odd hours of her day and lift her life above monotony or drudgery. Indeed work could never be drudgery to her, for she brought a beautiful spirit to it ever and did all she had to do as "seeing Him who is invisible."

But what had the government done for her while she was so busy in doing for others? Was she who had given so much, she who served through five long years as faithfully as ever soldier served, giving up all that woman holds dearest—home and the training and companionship of her children—she who gave herself in a way that is rarely imitated and never excelled, who followed from hospital to hospital, from battlefield to battlefield, braving alike the fearful cold of winter and the no less fearful heat of summer; who

saw sights too dreadful for woman's eyes and that haunted her through all the years that came after, was she cared for as she deserved? The soldier had his monthly pay—a pittance surely—and yet something; he had food and clothing and was cared for as well as he could be under the circumstances. What did she have? Who can believe that she served all those dreadful years with no recompense save that of an approving conscience and the love of the soldier and his friends? This is much, and she would not have been without it, but would it have been lessened in any way had justice been done her and a liberal sum marked opposite her name each month on the pay-roll? Is this the boasted gratitude of republics? This our standard of justice? This woman saved the government many thousands of dollars' worth of hospital and sanitary supplies and brought to the front many more thousands of dollars' worth of clothing, vegetables and other needed articles. It is even said of her that "her services were worth more to the army than that of all its brigadier generals." She spent herself royally in service; she came and went untiringly; she gave all—all! and what did the government do for her in return?

Oh, men! Cover your faces for shame while I tell that twenty long years after she was mustered out, when she had grown old and broken, and yet somehow still shamed younger women with the multitude of her charities, the strength and beauty of her work—twenty years after—she was granted a pension of twenty-five paltry dollars a month! Oh, the shame of it! the bitter wrong and injustice! She did not ask for a pension. She was too noble to ask for one—her friends must do it for her. They tried to get a bill through Congress allowing her fifty dollars a month, and this was but a fraction of what should have been given her. But though Generals Grant, Sherman, Pope and Logan spoke in her behalf, and would fain have had it otherwise; though Mrs. Livermore and other influential friends and co-workers did all they could, the bill was "amended by the committee" and

only twenty-five dollars monthly allowed her. Let that day—May 9, 1886—be branded as a day of our nation's shame. Twenty-five dollars a month—three hundred a year after all she had done! Think how generously we deal with the widows of our generals and other high officers—women who, though they bore loss, loneliness and anxieties in common with all of the women of the North and South—yet did nothing, gave nothing in comparison with what Mother Bickerdyke did and gave. How could we, oh, how could we have done it? How it must have hurt her proud heart and outraged her sense of justice—and yet, no! So little did she think of or value self she was glad even of this amount. "It is so much more to work with. I can do a great deal of good with it," she said, and went on her beautiful way bravely, uncomplainingly. Now it is too late to do for her, but even yet the government should acknowledge its sin towards her and show its repentance by doing some worthy deed for those she loved—the few of her "boys" that are still left with us.

Though the government seemed ungrateful, she knew the individual soldier was not so. Wherever she went they—the soldiers—flocked to see her. Parties were given in her honor and receptions tendered her. And no old soldiers' reunion was complete where it was possible for her to go without her. I have heard her tell how the "boys"—white haired and gray-bearded, grandfathers and, in many instances, great-grandfathers, but yet her "boys"—always crowded around her and what tender recollections they recalled, sometimes with tears as they spoke of a fallen comrade, and again with hearty laughter as the memory of some amusing incident of camp life came back to them. They would beg for some memento of her to carry home "and keep always"—and she would give them a handkerchief, a flower, or even a piece of the dress she wore "snipped out" regardless of its price or worth, or of the condition in which it left her. "What did it matter so that the boys wanted it and were pleased," she would say; "I had always

other dresses and more handkerchiefs at home." An indulgent, loving old mother was she, and if she spoiled the boys sometimes it was all for love's dear sake" and because she would make all around her happy, and ever

> "Her life, her work, each kindly thought,
> On other lives their sweetness brought;
> Enshrined in hearts is her renown,
> Their love supreme shall be her crown."

CHAPTER XI.

BACK FROM CALIFORNIA—A LETTER TO THE SOLDIERS.

> "One of these days we shall know the reason,
> Haply, of much that perplexes us now."

And then, perhaps, we shall know why it is that so often the young and joyous, those standing with glad anticipations of future usefulness upon the threshold of life, who are dreaming dreams and seeing visions of what is to be, and who feel within them the stir of mighty thoughts and ambitions—perhaps we shall know why these are taken from earth and the old and feeble, those who are worn and weary and long for rest, to whom life seems as a struggle that is past, its glory gone, its dreams forgotten, these are left "yet a little longer."

It was a longing cry for "mother" from the lips of her beloved step-daughter that called Mother Bickerdyke back from California early in 1887. This daughter was a fair young girl in her "teens" when Mrs. Bickerdyke began her work in the army, and went to Covington, Ky., to live with a relative when her home with "mother" was broken up. There she had remained a dear and useful member of home, church, and society. She was a sweet singer and was often called upon to aid in concerts and "musicales," and in the church choir. But now a dread disease had fastened upon her, from which she knew she could not recover, and her heart turned with strong longing to the noble woman who was the only mother she could remember. Not only the mother, but her brothers also hastened to her bedside and remained with her until the end. All that love could do—all that money could do was done to stay the step of Death—but in

vain. The suffering ceased in July, the feeble hand let go its hold of the strong hands of those who loved her to clasp that of the angel and be led out to larger life and higher service elsewhere, and the mother who had faced death so many times, and had gone with so many down to the very gates of death, she who was so brave and strong to bear sorrow, found her heart rent anew with anguish, but through it all she heard the call to higher things—that call that sounds for us each one in every sorrow, so only we are strong enough to hear it—and her soul responded to it. She came from that chamber of Death consecrated anew to her work of love and charity, with all her sympathies deepened and purified, with greater power to do and to be—to cheer and to encourage.

She returned to Kansas when her work in Covington was over, living with her son, Prof. James R. Bickerdyke at Bunker Hill, where he was engaged as principal of the schools, and later, when he was elected superintendent of the schools of Russell county, she moved with him to Russell. Ever after this her home was in Kansas, though she made frequent trips elsewhere, chiefly to attend soldiers' reunions and to further her work as a pension attorney. She was instrumental in securing pensions for a great many soldiers and nurses. In this work, as in everything she undertook, she was untiring and successful where one of less courage and determination must have failed. The wants and needs of her soldier boys seemed ever in her mind and for them she did her chief work, but she did not confine herself to it alone. Any "righteous cause" might be sure of help from her. Nor did she wait until a cause grew popular before espousing it, but was ever ready to share the "meager crusts" with the brave few who stand in the forefront of every movement or cause. She believed in the right of suffrage for women as for men, and when this was to be voted upon in Kansas she addressed the following letter "To the Heroes of 1861-1865." I copy it from a local paper in which it was published shortly after it was written, in June, 1893. Kansas is espe-

cially a "soldier state" and the "soldier vote" was at that time, and may still be, considered as the decisive vote. But to the letter:

Comrades—It is with deep and profound gratitude that we recall how promptly and willingly you obeyed the call of that grand man, our President, Abraham Lincoln, and with loyal hearts and true, you swelled the ranks to over a million men, a million of young, brave, patriotic, strong men, who gave themselves as a willing sacrifice on the altar of their country, and marched with willing feet to victory, and many of them to death. Over six hundred battlefields were baptized with the heart's blood of our best young men. You stood shoulder to shoulder and braved all dangers of the march, the camp, the battlefield, the hospital and prison for a principle, and never stopped until the union was saved, and the last vestige of human slavery was forever banished from our land. Then you returned to the peaceful pursuits of life, made pleasant, prosperous homes, and have made Kansas one of the foremost states in the Union. Yes, Kansas owes her existence to the boys in blue, and to their wives and daughters, and the grand old hero John Brown, whose "soul is marching on."

But your locks are turning gray, your steps are no longer firm and elastic as in 1861. Yet while you cannot endure the march, the fatigue and exposure as before, you are nevertheless leaders at home, and you have an influence no other class of men can exert for the welfare of the state.

You did your duty nobly while the nation was bleeding at every pore. You fought her battles and won her victories. While you were fighting in the field woman was at home caring for the family and loved ones, bowing around the family altar pleading for you, and, with woman's love and energy, planning and organizing the great sanitary commission, which sent supplies to the hospitals; and woman's warm heart and tender hands cared for the sick and wounded, and from hearts full of tenderness and love came encouraging letters that cheered the lonely hours. Many a time when the mail was distributed we have seen tears of joy trickle down the manly cheek of the soldier, as he read a letter from mother, sister, wife or sweetheart, and oft have we answered those letters for those who from wounds or disease were unable to write. A man who has courage to battle for the right has a warm, loving heart.

We stood by you, and cared for you, and helped you in the struggle for national supremacy and human freedom! We now appeal to you as true, brave, noble, generous, chivalrous, heroic men to stand by and assist us by voting for us to have the right of ballot. We are interested as much in the government of the land as are men. Our homes are to be protected; our children are to be protected in their rights. Our interests are one, we are a unit, and we ask you to stand by us

in Kansas as we stood by you in all the hard fought battles. In the fiercest of battles women were there, and in the hospitals. Everywhere we have done what we could for you. In honor you have preferred them—"The lords of creation have women obeyed," and she has crowned him with honors, as wisdom could. We ask you as comrades to vote and work for the amendment enfranchising women.

Yours in Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty,
MOTHER BICKERDYKE.

This letter—simple as truth is simple—direct as truth is direct—thrilled through with her strong desire for justice to her sex—was read at Memorial Day gatherings, and was listened to with the loving attention that greeted all that came from her lips or pen. The report of the one committee appointed to act upon it that I have preserved is probably similar to that of many others. This is as follows:

WHEREAS, Mother Bickerdyke, so well and favorably known to the soldiers of Kansas, and whose services to them and the country are universally recognized by them. And

WHEREAS, The question of enfranchising women in the state of Kansas is to be voted upon at the next November election as an amendment to the constitution of the state. And

WHEREAS, Mother Bickerdyke has appealed in a circular letter to the soldiers of Kansas to support and aid the proposition by their votes and influence; therefore be it

Resolved, By the soldiers assembled on Memorial Day at Bridgeport, No. 131, G. A. R., that they recognize the eminent authority from which the appeal has come and that they will in this duty to their country and its noble women endeavor, as in the past, to be loyal to both and perform their duty as true patriots.

I omit the signatures for obvious reasons.

This letter of Mother Bickerdyke's must prove to all who may read it that she was not "illiterate" in any way, but could express her thoughts with ease and grace on any subject that interested her.

As proof of the western soldiers' great love for her let me state that before her pension was allowed, they proposed to tax themselves a certain sum yearly to maintain her above want and in the ease most women of her age—broken as she was by the great hardships she had endured—would desire, but she

would have none of it. "Give it to some poor soldier or his family, but not to me," she said, and her word was "law" here as elsewhere.

Though the letter I have given here did not bring the result she hoped for it could not have failed in awakening thought on the subject and it will yet bear fruit, since no earnest effort for the right can fail. Time is long and some day justice will be done to all.

CHAPTER XII.

LETTER OF A MUTUAL FRIEND.

He loves Christ best who serves men most.—*Lowell.*

Among the mutual friends of Mother Bickerdyke's and mine is one lady who is truly of a family of soldiers, her father, her four brothers, her husband and her brother-in-law all having been in the army for longer or shorter periods. Her father was also a government scout for a number of years and all did valiant service for the preservation of the Union. Because of this and because of her own personal worth and ability, her endearing womanly qualities, she was a valued friend of Mother Bickerdyke's and lived in close intimacy with her. At my request she gladly added the following letter to the story I am trying to tell:

"Mother Bickerdyke—the renowned and much-loved army nurse during our civil war. There are too many veterans yet living who venerate her memory and testify to her loving, faithful service to the sick and suffering soldiers for me to hope to add much more. I have been closely associated with her at some of the reunions of the veterans. I have stood by her side and have seen old gray-haired men come, with outstretched arms and tears coursing down their cheeks, saying, "I want to see Mother Bickerdyke once more. You nursed me when I was sick and wounded nigh unto death back to life and health. I am *so glad* to see you once more." Such exclamations were frequently heard as she stood on the platform and the boys in blue came to greet her. It seemed to me there was a heavenly radiance in her face. It was a halo of such holy light, such peace, such joy that she really was the most beautiful woman I ever saw.

I have heard her relate the story of the soldier who was left upon the battlefield, desperately wounded, after it was thought every live man had been found and removed from the field. After the wounded had been made as comfortable as it was possible to make them, in "the wee small hours of the night" she sat down to rest by an upstairs window, and lis-

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tened out of the window over the field strewn with the dead to see if any signs of the living could be heard. She heard a faint moan. She called her faithful "Pete"—a man detailed to help her on any or all occasions that might arise. She filled a canteen with "hot toddy," gave Pete a lantern, and they started in the direction of the sound she had heard. As they came nearer the moaning became more distinct, and she knew that some poor fellow had been missed. When they came to him and tried to lift him up they found his clothes were frozen in the ice. (It was at Fort Donelson, where the soldiers, especially the wounded ones, suffered so terribly from being obliged to lie on the cold, wet ground with little or nothing to protect them.) She sent Pete back for an ax to chop him loose. She set her lantern on a broken cannon that was near by and administered her restorative to the poor boy, and when Pete returned they were ready to chop him out and take him to the hospital. This man recovered and, in after years, she had the pleasure of meeting him at some reunion.

I said to her: "I have read how the soldiers hugged Mother Bickerdyke and I do not wonder at it." "Hug me!" she said, "you would think they would break every bone in my body!"

Mother Bickerdyke undoubtedly had heard that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach, as she trapped in this way the young lieutenant who came to arrest her for burning the breastworks at Chattanooga, when there was no other way to keep the sick and wounded soldiers from freezing but by using the great logs of which these breastworks were made for keeping the fires burning. This officer walked into her hospital and asked why she was burning up their fortifications. "To keep my boys from freezing," she answered, and he returned, "Consider yourself arrested." "Well, lieutenant," she said, "just wait a minute. I have some nice, warm corn bread and milk for supper. Sit down and eat with the rest." He did so and while he was busy filling up the inner man she hurried to General Thomas' headquarters, and going up to him said, "General Thomas, I am under arrest, and have come myself to report to you."

"Why, what is this? Who has arrested you?" asked the surprised general. She told her story (and Mrs. Livermore, too, has told it in a very interesting way in "My Story of the War"). The outcome was that the flippant young lieutenant was himself marched to the general's headquarters under arrest, while Mother Bickerdyke got into the ambulance that had so hurriedly taken her there and went back to her quarters to continue burning breastworks to keep her boys comfortable.

I have also heard her tell of the poor fellow who had his neck broken, or dislocated, so that if his head moved the pain was most excruciating. He had to be carried from the field up a long hill. There were men to carry him, but who could

properly support that head? It was raining, muddy and slippery. Mother Bickerdyke, when called upon, said, "I cannot support that head and keep it steady over such a way." (Strange words from her lips—"I cannot.") Instantly, as she said, her husband's voice came to her as plainly as she ever heard it saying, "*Yes, you can, Mary Ann.*" (That voice that had been silent for such long, lonely years—what joy to her to hear it again—come back, as it were, from the so-called dead to tell her she could do whatever she needed to do.) Thus aided and inspired she took the poor man's head between her strong hands and supported it safely up the hill and to the hospital. It would be interesting to know if this man recovered, but this I do not now remember, and the good mother has gone where we may not question her.

I have heard her say so many times that she did not want any more written about her, that there was too much already; but I believe there is one phase of her life that has not until now been touched upon—her home life. In that lies the beauty and grandeur of true motherhood. It has been my pleasure and privilege to enter the sanctum of that home where she and her youngest son lived. I never witnessed truer mutual devotion than existed between them—mother and son. The life of the son spoke volumes for the training that grand mother gave him. Oh, the pity that every mother does not realize the God-given gift of her children, and strive, as did this mother, to send out pure, noble men and women into the world! Jails and penitentiaries would become things of the past were this so. This son was our county superintendent of public instruction for several years. He not only labored to build up our schools in an educational way, but, realizing that "In moral worth God excellence placed," he unceasingly labored to bring them to a high moral standard. His every effort was to give to the world pupils that were manly and womanly, a credit to home and society. Such was his life, built up and fortified by that mother, that were I to write his epitaph it would be "J. R. Bickerdyke, Man—God's noblest work."

She has told me how she and this son, upon receiving a letter from her daughter in Covington, Ky., telling them she was suffering from that dread disease—cancer—immediately left home and business and went to her, remaining till the last though it involved them in great financial loss. In her great, loving heart money could never come between duty and self. Her home life was plain and sensible—nothing "puffed up" or affected—just plain, loving Mother Bickerdyke to the last.

I remember how in the trying times of drought and failure of crops, when our people had more or less encumbered their homes with mortgages, Mother Bickerdyke, lingering a moment in some place of business, overheard two schemers talking. She heard enough to convince her they were planning to foreclose a mortgage and take a certain poor man's home

away from him. She hurried home to her son and said, "Jimmy, I want you to take me immediately to Mr. Case's. He is going to lose his home; they are planning to take it from him very soon." Jimmy very willingly did as she requested. She saw the man, told him of the plot and helped him arrange to meet his obligations. In telling me of this incident long afterward she said, "Today Mr. Case has his home in peace and plenty," and her satisfaction seemed as great as though it was her own home saved.

The charity of this dear old mother in civil life was only bounded by the limit of her means. Her time and energy were always ready to be devoted to the soldier—and to others in need. I know personally of instances where she went, carrying delicacies and medicines at her own expense and remained and cared for the poor suffering man until death released him. She had great influence with Senator Plumb in securing pensions. Many troublesome, intricate applications were unraveled by her industry and perseverance. She had the satisfaction of knowing that the disabled, deserving soldier had at last received the pittance which his government so profusely promised him in the hour of its dire distress. Noble Mother Bickerdyke! Rest thou in peace and joy! M. J. H.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY.

"For thee! For thee! May the good saints bless the day thou wert born!"

This must have been the thought of many Kansans on that memorable nineteenth of July, 1897, when they celebrated the eightieth anniversary of Mother Bickerdyke's birth.

She was living then at Bunker Hill, a small town in the eastern part of Russell county, where her son, James, had charge of the schools, the whirligig of partisan politics having ousted him from the office of county superintendent and left those of us who valued high, faithful service and efficiency to deplore the mixing of things political with things educational in a way to deprive us of so worthy a head for our schools. When men have grown wiser, when they "vote as they pray" and know there can be no hard and fast lines drawn between their religious and their political duty; when men are rated above party and our officers are elected because of their worth and ability to serve the people in doing the duties of the office that claims them, rather than because of money or "political pull," we shall be able to retain in office such men as this son of Mother Bickerdyke.

As it was, when his last term expired in 1895, he and his mother with him, moved from Russell to Salina, where he had secured a professorship in the Wesleyan College there. For some reason that I do not now recall, he only stayed one year there and then returned to Bunker Hill; and thus it was that the eight-

ieth birthday found them there, and there because of Mother Bickerdyke's presence the great interest of the day centered, though it was celebrated all over the state by order of Theodosius Botkin, then Department Commander of Kansas G. A. R. A local paper, printed a few days later, gives this account of what was done:

Without a doubt Bunker Hill had the best celebration in the state of Kansas on last Monday, though "Mother Bickerdyke day" was celebrated in almost every other town in the state. The presence of Mother Bickerdyke gave to the occasion a dignity and fullness of purpose, a spirit of veneration and admiration that could not have been experienced in any other community. Mother Bickerdyke has friends by the score in this county, and all who could went to Bunker Hill to help our "mother of the nation" celebrate her eightieth birthday.

At an early hour, in fact on the previous night, friends came from all directions. The immense crowd that finally gathered there was variously estimated, some judges putting the number as high as fifteen hundred—a large crowd to be cared for in a town the size of Bunker Hill. During the forenoon the doors of the Bickerdyke home were thrown open to the admiring and sometimes curious visitors. Professor Bickerdyke attended to the duties of reception committee in a cheerful and hospitable manner, and Mother Bickerdyke had a kind word and a friendly handclasp for all who came to do her honor.

At the tent (a very large one was put up for this occasion), where the Bunker Hill band was furnishing some excellent music, the exercises were begun some time before noon. Rev. Mr. Dixon, a former minister in this community (he whose death a short time before her own affected her so sadly) was called upon to deliver the address of welcome. He welcomed the guests in the name of our flag, the patriotism of the boys in blue and in the name of the town. His address was not only a welcome greeting, but it was a tribute to the flag of our country.

The crowd in the afternoon had been considerably swelled by the arrival of the Russell delegation, accompanied by the Russell band. Soon after this the two bands proceeded to Mother Bickerdyke's home to escort her to the tent, where the exercises begun in the morning were continued. Mother Bickerdyke and Mrs. G. A. Weed, who had spent four years in the field as army nurse, and was at that time living in Russell, were seated in a carriage, to which a long rope was attached, and were drawn to the tent by sixty veterans. The Glee Club of Bunker Hill opened the program by singing "When the Old Flag Waves," after which the audience joined them in singing "America." Chairman of the day,

Commander Botkin, then introduced Department Chaplain B. F. Pugh, of Wellington, who responded to the address of welcome, which was followed by music by the Russell band.

The next speaker, and the principal one of the day, was Assistant Adjutant General of the G. A. R. Lew Hanback, at one time our representative in congress. Mr. Hanback's address was a general review of the opening days of the war, the first call for volunteers, their trials and sufferings, and his personal experience in the army hospital, where he was sent to die. That he did not die he ascribes to the cheerful and motherly ministrations of one of those kind souls who, like Mother Bickerdyke, endangered their lives that the boys might have proper care. This was only the introduction that led to a final eloquent and sympathetic tribute to army nurses and the women of 1861-65 in general, and to Mother Bickerdyke in particular.

In the memory of all the soldiers dead, and in behalf of the soldiers living, he impressed a kiss upon her venerable brow. This tribute was touching to those who had experienced none of the privations and hardships of the war, and to those who knew only as it had been told them what a heroic work our army nurses, led by Mother Bickerdyke, had done for the boys of our land, and to those who had had the experiences how much more deeply so.

Mr. Hanback was followed by Col. Tom Jackson, of Newton, who, like Hanback, had been in the hospital, but unlike him, was unable to partake of the toast and tea prepared by the kind hand of the nurse. Colonel Jackson, however, in other ways learned to appreciate the services of these self-denying women and improved the opportunity to tell the people what had been done by them.

At this juncture Comrade Botkin presented to Mother Bickerdyke a silver water service in behalf of the fifteen thousand comrades of the G. A. R., seven thousand women of the W. R. C., and in behalf of all the loyal people of the state of Kansas. The gift, he said, was as imperishable as the hearts' affections. The pitcher represented the pitcher from which she poured the cooling drink for her sick and dying boys, and the glass represented the glass from which she gave the sufferers the draught that moistened their parched lips.

Colonel Feeder, of Great Bend, Kan., commander of the Sons of Veterans, was next introduced to the audience. He expressed his inability to make a speech after all these older men had preceded him, though he promised that the order he represented would take up the work when all of the old veterans had answered to the final roll call.

One of the most touching tributes delivered during the afternoon was that by Mrs. H. A. Allen, of Russell, who had but recently returned from Galesburg, Ill., Mother Bickerdyke's old home, and hence was well prepared to tell the people in what high esteem this grand woman was held by the

people of her home town. In behalf of the Russell W. C. R. Mrs. Allen presented to Mother Bickerdyke a gray gown and a pair of slippers, and in behalf of the people of Galesburg she delivered to her an evergreen wreath. No one but Mother Bickerdyke can fully appreciate the worth of this token of affection, for it was made from twigs gathered from her husband's grave.

This ended the exercises of the day, but in the evening old soldiers and their friends again gathered in the tent to listen to the old but ever interesting war stories. Several of those present made short speeches. Thus ended the day at Bunker Hill, and all who were there were glad that Commander Botkin had issued an order for the celebration of this birthday.

Several telegrams and many letters were received from old soldiers Mother Bickerdyke had nursed during the war. These were read and later were printed and bound into a neat volume and presented to the "Soldiers' Mother" as a lasting memento of love and gratitude. Besides the gifts presented publicly, many were given her privately—gifts that made her heart glad and gave her a newer, stronger sense of the great wealth of love the people held for her.

Among the decorations of the town were two banners stretched across Main street, one bearing the word "Welcome," and the other proclaiming "Honor to Mother Bickerdyke."

Sickness prevented my attending this celebration, but I sent a "proxy" in the person of my eldest son, who had the honor and pleasure of being a favorite of Mrs. Bickerdyke's. He ate dinner with her at her home table and told me much of the pleasant doings of the day and how cheery and "jolly" she was; how fully she enjoyed everything, and how deeply sensible she was of the honor done her—the love given her. Though she had four birthday anniversaries after this one, no other was so widely or so publicly honored, though friends were never lacking to remember her with gifts and congratulations.

Believing this letter will be of general interest, I give it. It is dated at Melrose, Mass., July 15, 1897, and runs thus:

My Dear Old Friend and Comrade: I see by the papers that the G. A. R. of Kansas will celebrate your birthday on

the 19th of July, when you will be eighty years old. I wish I could be with you on that day to assist in the celebration, and if you lived in Chicago instead of Kansas I would start directly to participate in the great day. The noble men of the G. A. R. cannot honor you too highly, nor express too strongly their sense of the great work you did during the war. I see that your army record, which was a record of service to the sick and wounded soldiers in camp, hospital and on the battlefield, *transcends that of all other women.* What a mother you were to them! How you labored for them! and spent yourself for them and in their behalf! I am glad that they are grateful to you! I am proud that they remember you! I sometimes meet old soldiers here in the East who were in the hospitals where you cared for them, and their grateful regard is unbounded. They always ask me to remember them to you with thankful love.

Well, those days have gone, and you and I will never be called to render service in another war, for we are near the end of the journey. Mrs. Eliza Porter and Mrs. Jane Hoge, of Chicago, Abby W. May and Abby Gannett, of Boston, all co-workers with both of us, and friends of ours, have passed away to the Better Land, whither we shall soon follow. I am thankful that I was privileged to work for the boys in blue, as I doubt not you are. It enriched us by giving us larger sympathies and precious memories. I am glad you are with your son, and I hope the other boy is still spared to you. Mr. Livermore and Etta and Lizzie send their love to you and their best wishes. Mr. Livermore will be eighty years old in ten months, and I am seventy-six. I enclose a picture of myself, taken when I was seventy-six—the very day. You see I have greatly changed. My children are well and live near me—Etta, with her six children, living opposite, and Lizzie unmarried and still at home. She has always been an invalid. One of my grandsons was married June 2 on his twenty-third birthday.

With much love I am your old friend,

MARY A. LIVERMORE.

And then, womanlike, she adds a postscript to say:

Mr. Livermore is perfectly well and is not yet gray.

These little details of home life prove how true and deep the friendship was, how sincere the interest each felt for the other. And still we believe the friendship abides—the loving interest continues now that they have reached the journey's end and met in the "Better Land" of their hopes and dreams, for

"We know God does not mean
To break the strands reaching between the Here and There."

And while the soul lives its love lives, too.

The mists of earth have rolled away and left them glad and happy co-workers again in that land

> "Where we find the joy of loving
> As we never loved before,—
> Loving on, unchilled, unhindered,
> Loving once, forevermore."

Another letter is from Helen Brainard Cole, a hospital nurse in Washington during the war. It tells its own story. Dated at Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin, June 11, 1897, it runs thus:

My Dear Mrs. Bickerdyke, or as we used to call you in the war, "Mother Bickerdyke": When I noticed in a recent copy of the Milwaukee Sentinel that July 19, on your eightieth natal day, there was to be a celebration for you. I exclaimed, "If I could leave my dear, sick, infirm father and mother I should go." How vividly I recall our first meeting with you in Louisville, Ky. Then your visit to me in Campbell Hospital, Washington, D. C., when you came to be present at the grand review, when we took the ambulance and went over the hills and plains about Washington, where the soldiers were camping, and when they saw you coming how they rushed with open arms, crying out, "Mother Bickerdyke! Mother Bickerdyke!" Oh, the pathos in the speaking that name told the story! It spoke volumes of devoted care, faithfulness that amounted to the divine. Some years after our Rebellion, in one of my visits to Washington, I attended the Spanish Embassador's reception. I met there General Sherman, and as we stood talking of Mother Bickerdyke's stupendous, unselfish labor for the soldiers, many clustered around to hear of your work, and an elegantly dressed lady from New York, who had accompanied General Sherman and his daughter to the reception, said, "I would give millions of dollars for such a record as Mother Bickerdyke has. How glorious!" And the splendid General Sherman said, "Yes, glorious! She outranked me!" And much more was said of your fearlessness, for you were pursuing the right! Good Colonel Kluick (whom you will remember as on General McPherson's staff and who was detailed to take the general's body home to Ohio) never tired of talking of you. He passed on many years ago. And how the ranks are thinning! When I saw you last you were passing through Syracuse, N. Y., en route west. I boarded the train to see you and you were surrounded with flowers—beautiful flowers—offerings of friends. How much I would like to visit with you and talk over the days with such blessed memories as ours, caring for the sick and wounded. I cannot find words to express what a pleasure it would be to hear from you. Cannot you let me know, dear? You need no assurance

of my faithful thought of you always. And the name Mother Bickerdyke stirs me to the very foundation, for it is identical with the bugle call—the dear old flag—"tramp! tramp! tramp!"—and "Marching Through Georgia," and every tender cord in my heart is touched with the memory of the sweet patience, loyal devotion that was rendered the soldier boy by Mother Bickerdyke. How they adored you! And believed in you as they did in their God. My dear, cherished, valued friend, I leave you in infinite love,

HELEN BRAINARD COLE.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LAST YEARS.

"I can no longer walk swiftly, but I must walk all the more diligently."

Though Mother Bickerdyke may not have had this thought consciously in mind in the four years that lay between the celebration of her eightieth birthday and the end of her earthly pilgrimage, her life expressed it. She seemed also to realize that for her time here was growing short and what she had to do she must do quickly. She kept steadily to her work of helping soldiers to get pensions, of looking after the needs of their widows and orphans and, in so far as it was possible to her, of making glad the barren places of life, but she lived and worked more and more quietly with longer and more frequent resting spells between her hours of labor. She went less and less from home, and accepted with gratitude the ever increasing care and watchfulness over her of her son and her faithful "maid servant," Lydia. Lydia, who had, by her long devotion and service, won such a place in the little family that she was not regarded as a servant, but rather, as Mother Bickerdyke would say, "as one of us," and whose care of her was more like that of a daughter for her mother than of one who worked for the weekly wage.

Friends came and went to the quiet, cozy home. The light-hearted and happy came to share their joys —the poor and sorrowing came seeking aid and sympathy—and to each one she gave according to their need. As in other years she dictated letters and

planned and directed the making of garments for the needy, but her working hours grew shorter and more and more gladly when

"Night had hushed the clamor and the stir"

in the village streets, and all grew quiet about her, she sat in her easy chair by the fireside in the winter evenings, or upon the porch wreathed round with blossoming vines, at the close of the summer day, and held quiet converse with her son who knew no joy greater than that of making "mother" comfortable and happy. Often her thoughts reverted to the time of her army life, and she talked of the scenes in the hospitals and upon the fields, or toiled again over the long marches. Her tones would grow tremulous and her eyes moist as she told some touching story of a soldier's death and of the last messages given her for the dear ones at home—for the bravest are ever the tenderest and those who so willingly and gladly gave their lives for their country in her need, thought not of self, but of others in their last hours. After the sad story would come others less so—those that brought a ready laugh from both mother and son —the while the air was filled with the drowsy hum of insects, the chirping of crickets and the persistent call of the katy-did—all mingling pleasantly with the quiet voices and making memories never to be forgotten. But even of this the good mother would weary and soon the "good nights" would be said and she went to her rest while he lingered over some school problem or read the inspiring thoughts of some favorite author.

Thus the quiet days melted into months and the months stretched out to years and left them still together, with the tie between them growing ever more tender, more holy.

Away back in 1887 the city of Ellsworth, located in the county adjoining Russell county, on the east and about twenty-five miles from Bunker Hill, bought a tract of land comprising one hundred and sixty acres and deeded the same to the G. A. R. of Kansas "as a perpetual holding and a permanent home for state re-

unions and aged soldiers and their families, their widows and orphans, with the express condition that a reunion of ex-Union soldiers should be held upon this land at least once in every two years." This condition, for some reason, was not properly complied with, and in 1897 the W. R. C. of the state was given the management of the place. With them began the practice of caring only for the widows and orphans of ex-soldiers. An average of forty women and children were supported here for a period of five years, when the state took charge and designated the same as the "Mother Bickerdyke Soldiers' Home and Annex to the State Soldiers' Home." The friend who kindly gives me this information adds farther, "There are fifteen substantial brick cottages, two hospitals, a headquarters building, etc. These were all erected by the state, though most of them since 1888. Both hospitals are well equipped, have competent nurses, and are steam heated. One hospital has old ladies as inmates, who are practically helpless, two of them being above ninety-eight years old. In this building there are sixteen old ladies, in the other seven. After the state took control of this place the needy mothers of ex-soldiers were also admitted there. The larger hospital has twenty rooms. The total number of women and children at this home at present (1906) is forty-five. There are fourteen children, and those of school age attend the school of Ellsworth. To these people everything is furnished by the state. They have literally no expense except in the case of those receiving pensions, who pay a small amount for washing. They have each a good home, with fuel, food and clothing. The whole is under the control of the same board of trustees that have charge at Fort Dodge.

"When the state took charge it was designated as the Mother Bickerdyke Home. This as a tribute to her. She had no other connection with it and was in no wise responsible for its progress. A room was set apart, furnished and known as Mother Bickerdyke's room, and was occupied by her on her occasional visits."

To beautify the grounds around this Home many trees were set out. Many of them are named for dif-

ferent individuals whom the people would honor and whose memory they would commemorate. Among them are several of extra beauty named and dedicated to Mother Bickerdyke, which seems much more beautiful to me than the erecting of monuments of stone, the great, wide-spreading branches inviting the passerby to rest and repose fittingly symbolize her widespread charities with the beauty and graciousness of her love. To this home she loved to go, and after longer journeys grew too tiresome for her she still went here. Here, as elsewhere, love greeted her. The women and children gathered around her and told her of their daily lives, their interests and their desires. Some of them were the widows and children of soldiers whom she had nursed and with whom she had stayed until death had come to end the struggle and the pain. They never tired of talking with her, nor did any other, and the days of her visits were "red letter days" in their calendar. I think, though I can not now be certain of it, that her last little trip from home was to this Home —that here she made her last visit.

A few times in these last four years she attended state reunions of soldiers, but only once did she go farther, that was when, in October, 1898, she went back to Cincinnati, Ohio, to join in the thirteenth annual meeting of the "Army of the Tennessee," where she delivered an address. She was elected a member of this society and was presented with an official badge, of which she was very proud, and which she prized so highly that it was pinned upon her breast as she lay in her last long sleep, and worn to the grave. Picture this woman standing in all the glory of her eighty-one well spent years, before this great crowd of ex-soldiers, and speaking to them words and sentences glowing with hope and patriotism, words that would come back to them long after and would ever incite them to higher life and greater endeavor! Picture the scene as they came around her, eager to press her hand once more and to hear again her fervent "God bless you, my boys!" See them as they—these old gray-bearded men—but her boys still—as they put their arms around

her and try once more to thank her for all she has done and been to them; listen while in voices trembling with emotion and sometimes choked with tears—tears that do not shame their strong manhood, but tell rather of its depth and truth—they talk of the times when she helped them win the fight for life and made it possible for them still to live and serve. Seeing, hearing all this, who could doubt the soldiers' love for her? Who could help but sympathize with her in her joy in it all? Yet it was a joy mingled with sadness, for she and they alike felt it would be the last time she could be among them thus, and when they kissed her good bye—as so many of them did, they knew it was the last time her lips of flesh would meet theirs. She said "Good bye, I shall not see you again here. I am getting old and must soon be mustered out, but we shall find one another somewhere, some time." With these and similar words of hope and faith they parted—the soldiers to go to their many scattered homes and take up their varied work with renewed courage and strength, because of this meeting with the old mother and the old comrades, and she to go up into Knox county to visit her old home and the relatives yet left there. Here, too, joy mingled with sadness as she went from place to place made dear to her by early association and noted the changes everywhere. But she knew progress must ever bring changes and with resolute will she put the sad thoughts from her and found pleasure in the newer scenes—the later growths. She missed the great forests where she had loved to search for the earliest spring blossoms, and where in autumn she had gathered nuts, mosses, ferns and long sprays of beautiful vines with leaves of purple, crimson and gold. She missed the old springs the great trees had sheltered, and the streams that once went singing on their way through wood and field, but she saw with pleasure the more comfortable homes of the people, the larger school houses and more numerous churches. In fancy she "wandered through her yesterday" with her husband by her side, building again those airy castles that were so little like the reality Time brought

to her. But she knew all was well and still she faced life bravely, finding, as all must find who live worthily and give loving service to those around them—

"Life's latest sands its sands of gold,"

and knowing there is good everywhere.

Here, as everywhere she went, friends welcomed her gladly, lovingly, and urged her to stay longer with them. But though she was glad to see them again, and felt all the warmth of their love, she could not tarry long. She missed the broad sweep of the Kansas prairies, their many voices called her to "Come back."

Mother Bickerdyke's home at Bunker, Hill, Kansas, where she died. November 8, 1901

CHAPTER XV.

GOOD-BYE TO EARTH.

"Say not good-night,—but in some brighter clime
Bid me good-morning."

After a visit of a few weeks among her relatives in Ohio Mother Bickerdyke came back to her son and her home in Bunker Hill and the quiet days went on as before.

It was not until that last year, 1901, that we began to hear rumors of her failing strength that alarmed us. But she kept up so well, she worked so steadily, she showed such active interest in all that went on around her, that even then we could not think how soon she was to leave us. The last spring came and

went with its promises as dear, its flowers as sweet as ever; but when the heat of the summer came on, her son, ever watchful for her comfort, noticed signs of increasing weakness, and remembering the good it once had done her, proposed another trip to California for her, but she said, "No, my son, I do not want to go," and he said no more about it. The days in their passing laid heavy toll upon her, but with great determination she arose each morning and occupied herself with the little duties and pleasures the day brought. Her friends still visited her, her "boys" never missed a chance to see her, but the shadow of the parting was over all. Yet it was not a dreary shadow—her brave spirit forbade any dreariness. It was only the sunset of a well spent day, struck through and through with light, giving strong promise of a beautiful to-morrow.

In July her son was obliged to go to Kansas City for medical treatment. She could not go with him, but some three or four weeks later she went down and returned with him. This I believe was the last time she went from home, though she went more or less into the homes of the village where there was want or sickness, doing always what she could to alleviate the want and cheer the sick.

On the afternoon of November first she got up from her chair to cross the room. Mr. Bickerdyke asked if he should help her. "Oh, no, my son, I do not need help," she replied, but the next instant, before he could reach her, she fell to the floor. She was considerably affected by the shock, and grew weaker rapidly until Sunday afternoon (Nov. 3), when she was stricken with paralysis of the left side, and it was thought the end was near. Word passed around that she was dying. But she clung to life and days of anxiety followed. Her mind as yet was clear and strong. Though she spoke little the few words to her son were full of love and motherly anxiety, but her faith never faltered, her courage was undaunted. Thursday afternoon her mind seemed failing, and at two o'clock Friday morning, November 8, 1901, she lost conscious-

ness entirely and lay quietly breathing until the day was nearly done, when she quietly and easily passed from earth, "falling on sleep" at sunset to awaken with the sunrise still safe and well in the Father's care, while we who loved her thanked Him for the long years He had left her with us and gave her a tender "Godspeed" to all that was to come.

Funeral services were held for her at her home on the following Sunday and, though it was very largely attended, it was a lonely funeral, for of her own—those bound to her by ties of kinship—only one son and a cousin or two were there. But they knew how truly she was beloved by all, and must have been cheered by the tenderness and sympathy shown by everyone there.

From the Russell *Record,* published a few days later, I take this extract:

Her body lay in state at her home and was viewed by all who came. Her countenance had the same calm expression as in life, and her appearance was as if she was taking a quiet rest. The badge of the Army of the Tennessee, which she prized so highly, was pinned upon her breast. The casket was a beautiful one—beautifully trimmed. At the head was a beautiful floral anchor, made of bright flowers and ferns, presented by the G. A. R. and W. R. C. of Russell. A card was attached on which was written these words, "Say not goodbye, but in a happier clime bid me good morning." On the center of the casket was a beautiful shield of white flowers, in which was worked the word "Mother," presented by the W. R. C. of Bunker Hill. At the foot was an anchor sent from Wilson, Kan.

The songs sung were very appropriate, consisting of "One Sweetly Solemn Thought," the words of which have brought comfort to so many who were homeward bound; "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," "Mother's Beautiful Hand," and "I Would Not Live Alway." Several addresses were given, one of them from the text, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all." When all was over, the last look taken of the dear face, the last farewell said, her body was taken back to Galesburg, Ill., her son and representatives of different G. A. R. posts accompanying it. Arriving at their destination they were met by the local G. A. R. and W. R. C., who took charge of the burial. There another service was held, attended by a great crowd of her former friends, old neighbors and soldiers, and all was done that could be done to show how deep and sincere was the honor in which they held her, and how truly they loved her. There was much

singing, the last song being "Tenting On the Old Camp Ground," that she had heard so often at reunions and loved so much. Dr. George E. Stocking, pastor of the Universalist Church, of Galesburg, at that time, took the lesson of comfort and inspiration from the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, and one of those who went from Kansas spoke tender words to her memory. I give this extract that you may know how he, in common with us all, loved her:

"There is no love so pure, tender and strong as that of a mother. Christ commanded us to love our mothers, and if any person ever followed that law our Mother Bickerdyke was a living exemplification. In Kansas the soldier boys knew her by no other name than 'Mother,' and she in turn always spoke of us as her 'boys.' But that heart is now still. Mother, after eighty-four years of labor, thought of her old home in Illinois, and expressed a wish to have her final resting place there by the side of her beloved husband (that husband whose love was so much to her that no other could ever taken his place and whose name she bore so proudly to the last). So we have brought her over six hundred miles of plains and hills to bury her in your beautiful city. I have known Mother Bickerdyke many years and loved her, as all of the boys have loved her. I have seen her at many reunions, and there has always been something pathetic about her. I remember that on the southern battlefields, when the noise of the cannons and the muskets stopped, mother was there, and despite the rain, mud and cold, she went everywhere to bring relief to the soldiers. There are soldiers in every state who owe their lives to her. There is no name in Kansas more respected, loved and venerated than that of Mother Bickerdyke.

"Comrades, time has put furrows in our cheeks and our eyes are dimmed. In the days of our youth we fought to perpetuate our country. You did your duty and did it well, and let me tell you something, though I do not know your lives, I am old-fashioned enough to believe in this book (placing his hand on the Bible), may He who guides the destinies of nations and men guide your steps to the land where you will meet Mother Bickerdyke. When we part tonight may we not say goodbye, but may we meet in some better clime.

"Brother Bickerdyke will go to his home, but his hearthside will be cold and mother's chair will be vacant, but may your prayers go up to heaven to help him. When the Memorial day comes round place a tribute on the grave of our Mother Bickerdyke, for him and for us."

At the grave in Linwood cemetery the local W. R. C. had charge and its ritual was employed, the officers forming a circle about the casket. When the last word was said, the last song sung, with falling tears and hushed, pathetic voices the people passed by, and as they passed each one dropped a flower upon the casket, and then "ashes to ashes, dust to

dust,'' slowly, silently they turned away and left all that was mortal of this dear old mother, asleep in the bosom of earth.

She had outlived the great majority of her soldier boys—thousands have preceded her to the Beautiful Shore, thousands more will soon be there—and, oh, the blessedness of that reunion! The joy of that mother to greet her boys again, one by one to take their hands in hers and call them by name—the loved, familiar name known on earth. And, oh, what will it be to them—these soldier boys—to meet her "Over there" and to find, amid all the blessedness and beauty of heavenly life, that she is still the same—the loved and loving Mother Bickerdyke forever!

You must all have read of the beautiful monument erected over her grave, a monument that symbolizes her life and work by the figure of a woman kneeling by a dying soldier, supporting his head in her arms, while she tries to stay the crimson tide of life that rushes from his wounds. It will stand there telling its silent story until Time wears it away. And there the patriotic fathers and mothers of America will bring their little children as to a shrine. Standing there they will tell her heroic story and it shall give strong emphasis to all that they would teach of love and service, of self-denial and all that makes glad the common way of life. It is a story to which not only the little children, but those of larger growth as well shall love to listen—the story of this woman who was true to every trust given her because she was true to herself. She knew "They serve God best who serve His creatures." There the fairest flowers shall bloom and the sweetest bird-songs be sung. There the great trees will ever stretch their branches heavenward and all will unite to tell of life and love and service and her who embodied it all—our Mother Bickerdyke.

CHAPTER XVI.

HONOR TO MOTHER BICKERDYKE.

"And love lives on and hath a power to bless
When they who love are hidden in their graves."

Mother Bickerdyke did much for Kansas and the Kansans delighted to honor her. All over our beautiful prairies—prairies of which poets have sung and statesmen have rejoiced to mention—the broad, spreading lands that one has called "the open hand of God," yielding riches and blessings to whosoever earns them by honest toil and perseverance—these lands are dotted all over with the homes of the soldiers, many of them brought here through the effort of Mrs. Bickerdyke.

Kansas has always "faced the right" and stood unflinchingly for freedom and truth. Her record is one to be proud of—her history such as no one can read without a thrill of civic pride and gladness—and this because our men and women are equal to their homes —because the individual life is strong and good.

Thinking of this, remembering how much of our state population is made up of the old soldiers and their descendants, I wonder how much of it all we owe to the soldiers' mother, dauntless Mrs. Bickerdyke? It is a debt not easily computed—a debt to be paid not in money nor in empty words of praise, but in daily living and in worthy deeds. This land

"Where even the deep blue heavens look glad,
And gladness breathes from the blossoming ground,"

where a something in the very air we breathe calls us to nobleness; where the breadth and freedom of the prairies becomes a vital part of us and will not let us live low and base; where we must needs be true to the best that is within us if we would be worthy of our sires and our fair heritage—this land that has wrestled with disaster, fought and conquered hardships—the mention of which would be disheartening to a less

brave people—this state once a scoff and by-word, but now one of the strongest, as she is one of the fairest of the great sisterhood of states, whose motto calls us ever upward "To the stars," whatever difficulties may be in the way, this great, beautiful state of Kansas is, more than any other, Mother Bickerdyke's monument and memorial built up by her boys with her name and the memory of all she did "writ large" in its history, imperishably engraven in the hearts of its people. Here her story will be told to the children and their children's children for generations yet unborn.

Her picture hangs in the Historical Department of our state capitol, in G. A. R. halls all over the state, in the "Mother Bickerdyke Home" at Ellsworth and elsewhere, and in many private homes, and children are taught to lisp her name with love and gratitude, because of the good she has done, and of the heroism and beauty of her life both in public and in the privacy of home.

Now that we can do no more for her, save to live as would best please her, facing the right and doing the duty that lies nearest us—each one with loving faithfulness, now that we no longer see her and can serve her no more, we are glad to remember we did not fail in honor to her while she was with us. We are glad that we let her feel the depth of our love and appreciation, and in so far as we could, gave back measure for measure of the good she did us. As she grew older and more feeble our tender care for her increased, and she lacked for nothing that a grateful people could give her. We did not keep our praise and our flowers until she was gone and then strew them lavishly over her grave, but let her have the comfort of them while she lived. But she asked little for herself. It was for others she pleaded always—and their needs were ever paramount to her own. So they had enough she "could get along."

Of several who knew her well I have asked, "What do you think was the keynote in Mother Bickerdyke's character?" One answered at once, "Executive abil-

ity, and, like Grant, never knowing when she was beaten, never giving up until she had accomplished her purpose." Another said, "It was truth—the strength of truth," and yet another said, "Her all-embracing motherhood." "Love," "Hope," "Courage and self-reliance," said others, and one added, "Her strong common sense" that made her say so often, when urging the granting of some asked for favor, as she said to General Sherman, when pleading with him to have an order changed, "Have some sense about it now, General." She admired courage and ability wherever shown, but she had no overpowering awe of a man simply because he was an officer. As I once heard her say, "They're only men anyway, and the biggest of them is only about six feet high." Whatever was the keynote of her character, it was the blending of all these traits mentioned that made her what she was.

She was a true democrat, with all the simplicity of a Jefferson, all the strength and tenderness of a Lincoln. For Lincoln she had great love and reverence. I have seen her eyes fill with tears as she spoke of his kindness to the soldiers and his grief over the great sacrifice of lives and the sorrow that spread over our fair land.

Though she associated with the highest and best of our land, moving among them easily because she did not think of herself, the poorest and the most uneducated felt no embarrassment in her presence. She met all upon the level of common manhood and womanhood, the level of truth. Hers was the true aristocracy—the aristocracy of intellect and of soul. Her speech was such as "the common people heard with gladness," her message was one of love and good will to all—her work told for the improvement of the whole life—the mental and spiritual as surely as the physical, and no one, unless he was a rascal and did not want to live well, could come from a meeting with her without feeling better and stronger for it. Even for the rascal she had a great pity, knowing there is moral sickness and weakness as well as physical, and

that the bad man is one of diseased moral nature and weak will, and is bad not because he loves evil doing, but because he lacks the strength to be good.

After her removal from Russell in the early fall of 1895, I did not see her again, as I was too much of an invalid to go from home, but she did not forget me, and every now and then I was cheered by a letter from her, characteristic letters they were, every one—revealing the mind and the heart of the mother—full of sympathy for my suffering, but with little or no mention of her own growing burden of pain and weakness. Once she wrote she had a picture for me, saying, "If your husband or son should be in Bunker Hill tell him to come in and get it, for I cannot send it by mail." I thought only of a small photo, probably a framed one, the glass over it preventing her sending it "by mail." Judge then of my surprise when upon receiving it I found it to be a large crayon portrait, heavily framed ready for hanging, copied from a beautiful photo of her taken when she was about seventy-five. "You cannot go from home," she wrote in reference to this gift, "and have to look always at the four walls of your room. If seeing the reflection of my old face can do you any good you shall have it to look at." So it is that the dear old face looks down at me always, at once an inspiration and a benediction, helping me to remember always the spirit in which she worked, and inciting me to greater patience and perseverance. It is a beautiful face to me.

> "Beautiful, though not with youth,
> But with the sweet, low lines of soul,
> The love that never dies."

Beautiful with all the record of her well spent life, with the ripeness, the maturity of age, the eyes brooding and tender with mother love, the mouth firm but sweet, the whole expression that of one who looked deep into life and believed in the good everywhere—in short, a face that, as Helen Hunt has said, is the "outside garment" of a strong, true soul, the face of our dear old Mother Bickerdyke! I wish I could tell what this pictured face has been to me all these years

of "shut-in" life; of how often, looking at it, I have held back the impatient word that trembled upon my lips; of how many times, remembering her courage, I have said, "I will" instead of "I cannot" when some hard task invited me to effort, or of how blest a thing it seems to me that the little son and daughter in our home should grow up in its—shadow—I was going to write, but let me change it to radiance, and with a sacred memory of her in their young hearts. They must be better through all after years because of it. I am glad to remember a similar picture must be in many a Kansas home, doing its good work in each one.

I have read somewhere a pretty little story of a little boy lost from his parents in the streets of some great city, but who said to his mother later, when found, "I wasn't lost at all, 'cause I was right there in front of a toy-shop window all the time and I knew where Mother Bickerdyke lived." I think this must be the feeling of many of her soldier boys. They must think of the "Beyond" as the place where "Mother Bickerdyke lives," and that will make it seem less strange, less far away, for they will think of her

> "As waiting on the shore,
> More beautiful, more precious than before,"

and will go gladly on to receive her welcoming greeting.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE.

"Pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." This was Mother Bickerdyke's working creed, it and the "golden rule" held all the doctrine she thought necessary in the living of a true religious life. Hers was essentially a religion of works rather than of words. She kept so busy in trying to follow Christ's example of living in loving fellowship with all around her, and doing good as she had opportunity, that she had no time, and certainly no disposition, for "doubtful disputations" over creeds and dogmas. In all my visits with her I remember but one talk that could be called distinctly religious, yet she always impressed me as being, what indeed she was, a deeply religious woman, one that rested all her hope and love, all her life on a power beyond herself. She no more doubted the infinite wisdom and goodness of this Power than she doubted her own existence. The love and help of the Father-God was as real to her as was her love for her children. It was this perfect faith that helped her over all the hard places and made her invincible. Did a task seem too great for her, "I *must* do it—Father help me," she said, and the help was given. "It is a lack of faith that makes us weak. If we had faith enough we could do anything," she told me when we were speaking of some work that, though seeming very difficult, had yet been done easily and successfully.

She was not creed-bound in any way. She cut the lines of creeds and doctrines that would hold her back

from communion with all that was highest and holiest, or limit her free thought and growth, as ruthlessly, as fearlessly as in her army life she cut the "red tape" that would hinder her from giving instant relief to the sick and wounded. She liked a minister who dared have "the courage of his convictions," and would speak the truth as it was in him. In speaking to me of a new minister who had just settled in town, she said, "You would like him. He is by far the most liberal minded minister we have had here, and is not afraid to know and to preach the truth." I never knew to what church she belonged, nor cared to know, since all her life showed she belonged to the great working Church of Christ. She felt little patience with those who would

> —"fix with mete and bound
> The love and power of God,"

though she might pity their ignorance in doing so. "They don't know any better now, but they will some day, somewhere," she would say when speaking of those who made a knowledge of and belief in some specified doctrine the measure of a religious life and the pledge of salvation. Hers was a family wherein the making of ministers must have been a "goodly work," for, when I was talking with her about writing a sketch of her life, she said, "Don't forget to tell them we had fifteen ministers in our immediate family, and," she added with a touch of pardonable pride, "four of them were bishops."

That she knew how surely sorrow, if rightfully borne, brings fitness for life and work, was shown in what she said to me one day when I had expressed surprise at the work she had done during her army life. I spoke of it as being a consecrated work. "Yes," she said, "I was consecrated by sorrow. In the few years just before the war God had taken seventeen of those I loved best from me—among them my husband. (There was always a sound of tears in her voice when she spoke of her husband.) By my sorrow I was taught sympathy for others' sorrows, by my

suffering I learned how to lessen the sufferings of others. Yes," she said again while a look as of one who summons

"From the shadows of the past
The forms that once had been,"

came in her eyes, "yes, I was consecrated by sorrow. God taught me how to work and gave me the work to do." Later, in that same conversation, she said, "No one ever does good work without being consecrated to it. This consecration comes through the trials and sorrows of life—Life, all that comes to us here is a discipline—a praparation for the work God would have us do." She believed

"The world we live in
Comes before that which is to be hereafter,"

and that the faithful performance of duty here, the loving service one to another, was the only preparation for the life beyond, and underneath all the work and bustle of her life lay a great peace, a beautiful serenity, a steadfast faith in the triumph of the right, however long delayed.

Some one has written "God could not be everywhere, so he made mothers." Mrs. Bickerdyke was surely one of these God-made mothers. This dear title—Mother—more dear, more sacred than royalty ever wore, was hers by every right of nature and of love, and she wore it with regal grace. It followed her everywhere, even as did the affection that prompted the giving of it. Tenderly as his own mother might have done, she listened to the last, low-spoken words of the dying soldier, soothingly she sang his "Swan Song," as death came nearer and nearer, and his soul, upborne by her singing, by the thoughts of love and home and Heaven, of which she sang—floated bravely out into the silence—God's silence. Tenderly then she gathered up the little keepsakes he had cherished and wrote the letter to send with them to those who waited at home, longing—God knows how wearily—for the sound of the footsteps they were never to hear again. Think how many times she did this through those dreadful years. What but mother love could have

prompted it? What but God's love could have sustained and strengthened her for it all? How easily and naturally it leads us to believe in the "Father and mother heart of God," as Theodore Parker used to express it. It is easy to believe this human love, though so pure and sweet, was sent by a divine Love —more tender, more complete. Knowing, as she did, of this divine Love, resting in it so fully, drawing her strength from it daily, hourly, living so close to the dividing line—if there be a dividing line—that when once she faltered and said, "I cannot," at a service asked of her, she heard "As plainly as I ever heard it in my life, my husband's voice saying, 'Yes, you can, Mary Ann," as she has told us; scarce knowing "where earth ends and Heaven begins," believing with all her heart and mind in a God of love, how terrible, how false to her must have seemed the words she was compelled to see daily as she passed in and out of the doors of the "Old Mission Dolores," where she lived during her long stay in San Francisco. There, inscribed upon "the arch encircling the altar," as Mrs. Davis tells us in her little story of "Mother Bickerdyke and the Soldier," so deeply engraven that two hundred years of sunshine and of storm have not sufficed to erase them, are these words, "How terrible is this place! This is none other but the house of God and the gate of Heaven." What a constant lie they must have seemed to her, and how she must have "ached," as she would say, to reach up and wipe them out. "How *terrible* is this place!"—the place where those devout Franciscan monks gathered the "wild children of the woods" and sought to teach them of the one true God who should supersede their Great Spirit, presiding over the "Happy Hunting Ground" of their childish faith. Truly the holy fathers must have believed in the gospel of fear and have felt that by it they could *scare* more of these people into a desire for more knowledge and a better way of life than they could win by voicing the great love story of creation—that story that all of Nature, with her beautiful flowers, her forests and streams, her mountains, lift-

ing glad hands to the heavens above, her valleys, over which the peace of God broods perpetually—yea, even with her fearful storms and mighty tempests, was ever trying to tell. The good mother heart, so full of love, must have given a constant contradiction to those words, and she must have felt it would almost have been better to let the Indians worship in the forests that were the "first Temples," rather than teach them that any place that was indeed a "house of God" could be a "fearful place." Her life here—filled with the quiet routine of work and service, gave a blessed denial to the graven words and preached ever the gospel of love. George Eliot tells us "There are some natures in which we are conscious of having a sort of baptism and consecration; they bind us over to rectitude and purity by their fast belief about us, and our sins become the worst kind of sacrilege, which tears down the invisible altars of trust." This was Mother Bickerdyke's nature. She held one to the right and made it seem impossible to shirk a known duty.

She has gone from us now but her spirit is still with us, still holding us to the "mountain road" of life and endeavor. In her going, though there was everything to miss, there was nothing to mourn for, for she had long outlived the allotted "three score and ten" and was ripe for eternity. Though her son was left lonely and bereft it was only for a little time. The tie between them was too strong to be broken and she drew him to her by all the power of love and memory, and we think of them now as sharing again the same home, united and happy, and still serving faithfully.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OLD LETTERS.

"Kind messages, that pass from land to land,
Kind letters, that betray the heart's deep history,
In which we feel the pressure of a hand."

How often we exclaim with "Ik Marvel," "Blessed be letters!" those dear messengers that, coming warm and throbbing from the hearts of friends, find glad response in our hearts, and so help us to be cheerful travelers upon the way of life.

Mother Bickerdyke had this help in fullest measure. I have spent several memorable days in looking over great files of letters written to her by her soldier boys —by their wives and mothers, and the great multitude of people to whom she had endeared herself through her services and her care. What letters they are! How they thrill and glow with love and gratitude! What glimpses they give of home and life there—what heart histories they reveal! I knew the old soldiers loved her dearly, but I could not dream how dearly, nor imagine such wealth of tender reverence, such depths of gratitude as these old letters, written long years after the close of the war, reveal. The soldiers have become farmers, doctors, lawyers, merchants, ministers, authors and teachers. They fill all the peaceful places of life, and are engaged in all its pleasant pursuits. They are wise and dignified and famous. Many of them have climbed high up on the ladder of life and are known "among the elders," renowned and eminent, and yet here they are boys again, gathering gladly about the dear mother's knee; here they one and all sign themselves "your loving soldier boy," and beg her not to forget them. They tell again to her some laughable incident of army life;

they seek to recall themselves each one individually to her mind by writing of some special kindness or favor on her part; of things droll and things pathetic that they hope may have staid in her mind as they have in theirs through the changeful years since they were mustered out. One asks her, "Don't you remember coming into the ward one day and finding a forlorn-looking new patient there? You asked me (for I was the one) was there anything in particular I craved? And I said, 'Yes, I want an *onion.*' You got it for me. I shall never forget how good it tasted or cease to be grateful to you for it." The giving of an onion may be less romantic than the giving of roses, but if it was what the sick fancy craved, it was better than roses then. One, a college professor, tells her of how he tried to teach lessons of patriotism by telling his students of the work she did and how eagerly they listened to him. He sends her his photo, asking her to put it among the photos of her many boys and "think of it as being sent by one who loves you next to his own mother. Bless your dear mother-heart," he adds, "how I wish I could look upon your blessed face once more." Many others, like this man, send her photos and beg for pictures of her, or they tell her of how one already hangs in the hall of the "G. A. R. Post" and how they all love it. They tell her of their marriages, their home life, their wives and children, and often the wives write, too, to thank her for their home and happiness, for "John," "Harry," "Will" (or whatever the name of the husband may be), "tells me you saved his life," and "but for you," as one writes, "I should be a lonely old maid today instead of being the happy wife and mother I now am." One of the "old boys" writes: "My little boys ask me why I have two mothers and want to know if 'Mother Bickerdyke' is their grandma? If she is, why doesn't she come to see us?" He also says: "There are quite a number of your boys here, and when I told them I was going to write to you they all said 'Give mother our love and best wishes, and God bless her.'" Another writes: "I always thought you did more good

than any other woman in the army, and you have a host of warm friends among the soldier boys." This man is "a direct descendant of John Rogers, the martyr burned at the stake," and of Mrs. Hannah Dusten, "who killed so many Indians in the troublous times in Massachusetts' early history," and truly the martial spirit must have staid in the family, for he tells her "when the war broke out there were six brothers; five of us enlisted in the United States army and the other enlisted in the Kansas state service and helped to repel Quantrell." What a rich offering this father and mother laid upon the altar of their country —six noble sons! It would be interesting to know how many of them lived to return to them, but of this he does not tell us. One says, "I often think, dear mother, that there must be a glorious crown awaiting you in the next world; certainly if the prayers of the soldiers you have nursed, and the widows and orphans you have helped, can avail, I am sure there is."

They call her the "soldier's best friend," "the best general in the field," "the grandest woman in America," and even "a God-mother." They say "she has a heart as big as an army mule team," a "will that would not let one boy die that it was possible to save," and make such love to her as is seldom made to a woman; give her such praise as is seldom given to mortal being. She is "our mother," "our noble, precious mother," to them all, and a great rain of blessings follow her, while a great longing to see her, "to look upon that beautiful, gracious face once more" fills many a brave heart. They speak of the meeting in "the beyond," of the "campfires" there, and what it will be to have her with them, going in and out among them with words of greeting and of love, even as she did in the old days, and these dear hopes help them to bear the separation from her here.

A W. R. C. woman writes to tell her how "at one G. A. R. meeting a comrade came to me and wanted to know when I had seen you. He said 'tell me all you can about dear old Mother Bickerdyke; how she looks, how she seems, and if she appears very old.

She saved my life; she will not remember me by name, but ask her if she remembers the poor little pale-faced boy-soldier she used to carry in her arms in the hospital at Memphis and called her "baby." I would go any distance to see her again—blessed old Mother Bickerdyke.'"

One old soldier, who was a prisoner and suffered so fearfully during the war that twenty years after its close he was still "unable to do any hard work," as he tells her, says: "I have attended several reunions and campfires lately. When the boys know I have seen you I am doubly welcome. Many times their lips tremble and the tears start when your name is mentioned. Dear old mother! the boys never forget the tender care and loving words of twenty years ago that come sweeping over our hearts in memory as we gather around the campfires of today."

Another writes to tell her how one of the old generals at a convention "tried to tell the boys about you and what you did for his men, but he broke down utterly at the memory of it all, as did many of those there, and there were more tears shed than words spoken, for we love you now, Mother Bickerdye, just as we loved you in the old days, and the tears that bedewed our cheeks were no reproach to our manhood."

Here among the letters I find several from Rev. Jenkin Lloyd Jones. His, like the others, are full of love and gratitude, and he, too, signs himself "Your loving soldier boy."

A Wisconsin comrade tells of attending a campfire or reunion at which Mr. Jones told them of her care and "blessed abusiveness" of him and how it helped to save his life. And how the great audience cheered. One, who signs himself, "Your Wild Irish Boy," tells how he dreamed that he and another comrade "bought her a beautiful house surrounded by a great lawn that was filled with great trees and beautiful flowers, and "when we gave you the deed you were so happy." The dream goes on until they sat down to supper, the three together.

"One of your old-time meals," he says, "with no frills or highfalutin' language," but just a "jolly good time all around, and I awoke calling for you—and you did not come." And so they wrote her—from all over the country—all so solicitous for her welfare, so anxious to know that she is well and happy and has no lack of comforts. Not one among them but would gladly share his home with her if need be and give from his poverty or his wealth, as the case might be, for her maintenance. Oh, it is beautiful and good, this outpouring of love, this inexpressible gratitude for the "soldier's mother!" How precious, how inspiring these letters must have been to her, and what answers she must have written to them; for, bearing eloquent witness to her love and the goodness of her heart, as well as to her careful ways, "Answered" is written across each one of these many, many letters. Beautiful, heart-satisfying letters—the ripe fruit of the seeds she sowed so many years ago. She "cast her bread upon the waters" and it returned to her in manifold measure of increase and blessing. She sent her great soul in love out over the mighty deep of human life and these are the olive branches returned for her cheer and comfort. She, "passing through the valley of Baca, made of it a well," whose waters refreshed not alone her own heart, but the hearts of all around her. No greater truth was ever uttered than that, "As ye sow so shall ye also reap." She sowed good deeds and they bore their legitimate fruit of love. How it should teach us to live ever by the simple but grand rule of doing as we would be done by. We speak of life as being complex and mysterious, and so it is in many of its phases, but at the heart of it all is simplicity—the simplicity of truth. The little child, looking into your face in confidence and expecting nothing but good, is your true philosopher. To it life means only being good and being loved. This childlike philosophy lay always in Mother Bickerdyke's heart and was expressed in her daily life. Her love was expressed naturally and easily in actions rather than in words. I never heard her say, "I love you,"

to anyone, but I saw it said often in what she did. She won a large place in the hearts and lives of others, but she did it unconsciously and while in the performance of her daily duty—for love's sake.

I have spoken of Mother Bickerdyke's love of pets that, beginning away back in her babyhood days, stayed with her to the end of her life here, as is proved by a letter I have just received from a lady who lived very near her all the last years of her life and knew her intimately. She says:

Mother Bickerdyke owned two pet geese and a large black cat that received considerable of her attention. She named the cat "General Logan." It was an exceedingly smart cat, and not seeing her, would wander through the rooms of the house in search of her. She spent much time talking to it and nursing it. General Logan sat by her side in a chair at the table during meal times and accompanied her in her walks. When she died this cat mourned her loss and seemed restless and as if it could not understand what had become of its mistress.

Her pet geese were given to her by a friend. They followed her in and out of the kitchen, ate from her hand and would frequently fight the cat when around Mother Bickerdyke as if they were jealous of the attention it received from her. These geese were three years old at the time of her death. Her son, Prof. Bickerdyke, kept and cared for them after she was gone, and when, three years later, he, too, died, they were sent to the one remaining son, Hiram Bickerdyke, in Montana, who says they shall be the pride of his ranch and shall be privileged to live on his irrigating dams and do as they please.

These things are not much of themselves, but as an index to her character, showing how great was the depth of her love and tenderness towards all created things, they are important and worthy of record.

Another pleasant incident I would tell you, though it has no connection with the above: Among the many of Mother Bickerdyke's letters that were sent me I found this little note, written in the feeble, trembling hand of age. It was found pinned to a package of sheets and pillow cases sent to the Mother Bickerdyke Home: "These articles were made by an old lady seventy-nine years old. She has been reading Mother Bickerdyke's book and is a great admirer of the dear

old lady, and is much interested in her work. She requests that these sheets and pillow cases he used for Mother Bickerdyke, especially, in the Home."

No name was signed to this note and, so far as I know, it was never known who the old lady was who thus practically demonstrated her love for the "Soldiers' Mother."

CHAPTER XIX.

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT.

From Mother Bickerdyke to Her Sons.

"And the truth of truth is love."

Through the kindness of Mr. Hiram B. Bickerdyke I am permitted to copy here three of his mother's letters written to him and his brother, Prof. James R. Bickerdyke, from the front. As is the case in all her letters, the tender solicitude of the mother breathes in every line. The one is written "On board of boat, ten miles north of Fort Pillow." It is dated "Jan. 25, 1863," and is as follows:

My Dear Boy Jimmie: Enclosed you will find five dollars to pay your tuition with. I want you to write me how you like your boarding place, who your teacher is, and if you attend Sabbath-school. I want you to be a good boy and grow up a Christian, and do all the good you can in the world. Remember that God has placed us in this world to be good and to do good. Oh, then try to live for God and for those around you. Resolve that you will be a man—*a true man*—a noble, God-like man. Set your mark high. You do not realize the good opportunities you now enjoy. What a contrast between today and last Sabbath! You know how we spent last Sabbath. (Evidently she was with him then.) Well, today we had a sermon on board of our boat by the Rev. B. F. Rogers, chaplain of the 15th regiment, Illinois Volunteers. I liked the sermon much. It was about the certain punishment of those who sin. While the preacher was talking most of the soldiers gathered around to hear. Some stoop up, others sat on boxes, beds and on the floor; some were sick, others dirty, but they all listened with deep interest. While these exercises were going on several soldiers were loading their guns at the other end of the cabin, preparing to go out on picket duty while the boat lay up to the shore to take on fuel. It seemed so strange to see the people gathered round the preacher in one end of the boat while men were loading their weapons to shoot men with in the other end. But we see many strange and sad things connected with this war. This evening several on the boat, including some of the officers, have been singing negro melodies. Oh, how much better off you are than we! I hope you will try

to appreciate your privileges and will improve your time. When you write to me direct your letter to me in the Field Corps in Grant's Army. I shall be below Memphis, but where I cannot say.

Remember what your mother has said to you. I think of you every day and pray to God to take good care of you during my absence. It is hard to be away from you, but if you are a good boy I can put up with it. Your affectionate mother,

M. A. BICKERDYKE.

The second letter is written at Chattanooga, Tenn., January 3, 1864, nearly one year later, and now her two boys are together. The letter is addressed to James and Hiram Bickerdyke at "Forest Home," Chicago. It runs:

My Dear Children: No day, hardly an hour, that your mother does not think of you, although it is so long since I have written. But if you could see the poor sick and wounded soldiers that need my care you would not wonder that I do not write oftener. I am now in a field hospital in Chattanooga, Lookout Mountain standing just in front of our camp. There are between four and five hundred men after whom I look every day. Two days ago it rained powerfully and in the night the weather changed, and wind blew down some of the tents and the sick men were very much exposed. It froze hard and was as cold as it is at Chicago, and the poor men, wounded and sick, far away from home to defend you, my children, and all the North from bitter foes. I hope you will ever remember that we are indebted to our noble soldiers for quiet at the North. Many are now lying low with most painful wounds, who will languish and then die far away from home, mother and sister, and suffering for want of attention. I have been to Cincinnati since I saw you. I found them all well. I hope, my dear children, you will so live that this may be to you a happy new year. Improve your time, be obedient and love and be kind to each other and all around you. I am grateful to God for providing for you while I am able to do for our poor soldiers. Let me hear from you that you are good boys and then I shall be happy even here. My sons, I want you to love and obey your Saviour. Pray for yourselves and your mother. May God keep you ever. Your loving mother,

M. BICKERDYKE.

On one page of this letter she writes to the lady who was caring for her children thus:

My Dear Mrs. Nichols: I hope you have received the forty dollars I sent you several weeks since. Will you not write soon, and have the children write to their mother? I hope they are good boys and do not give you unnecessary trouble.

God will bless you in your good work of training these dear children under your care. I have many anxious thoughts and my prayers daily ascend for them and yourself. May God direct and bless you. MARY BICKERDYKE.

The third letter is from Nashville, Tenn., March 21, 1864:

My Dear Children, James and Hiram: I reached Huntsville in safety one week ago last Saturday, and left there again on Monday in company with Mrs. Porter to return here to hasten forward the vegetables that are so much needed by our poor sick and well soldiers. All need them much in the army now, and I hope to take many to them, sent from Chicago, Galesburg and many other places where they are doing so much for the soldiers. I hope this year all the boys and girls who can have a bed in the garden will sow onions and keep them from weeds, and plant potatoes. If every Sabbath-school boy and girl would determine to raise or earn one bushel or one barrel of vegetables I think every soldier would have a few.

The day we came here General Grant left for Washington and General Sherman took his place. There is great preparation being made for the spring campaign,—new wagons and horses and mules to take the place of wornout ones and many new recruits to take the places of the dear soldiers who have died in hospitals and on the battlefield. Poor soldiers, who have left dear wives widows and their little children fatherless. I hope the boys and girls in Chicago and all through our land will love and try to care for the poor soldiers' families, whose fathers have died. Children who are at school as you are, and especially those who are at home with their dear fathers and mothers, must not forget that if the soldiers had not fought and died for them they, too, might have been without their kind fathers and mothers and their pleasant homes. I thought when I was in Chicago that the people who were living in comfort there knew but little what it cost others to secure to them so much peace in this time of war. And I thought, too, that mothers who could stay at home and work for the soldiers ought to be very thankful and do much to sustain and comfort those who are willing to leave all to care for those in camps and hospitals.

My visit to you was so pleasant, and, knowing how kindly you are cared for, I can return to my work here and thank God that my fatherless boys are so kindly provided for by those who love the soldiers and the dear Saviour, to whom I wish to commend you. Love Him, obey your teacher, and God will bless and keep you darlings. MOTHER.

P. S.—Give much love to Mr. and Mrs. Nichols, and ask them to pray for your mother. MARY BICKERDYKE.

How truly every mother will sympathize with this mother in her yearning love for her "fatherless boys," left to the care of others while she went out to the larger duty of caring for thousands of boys whose mothers could not be with them. How solicitous she is for their spiritual well-being, how anxious that they should "aim high" and become wise and helpful men, citizens of true patriotism and usefulness. What a joy it was to her in after years to know her hopes and ambitions for them were all fulfilled, and they had become just the kind of men she wanted them to be.

Not only do these letters reveal her love and hopes for her sons and the yearning in her heart for them, but they tell us much of the kind of woman she was and of her great unselfishness, for while she writes much of the sufferings and hardships of others not one word does she say of her own trials and hardships. She seems not to think of self, but only of those for whom she is caring, dear, noble Mother Bickerdyke!

Besides these letters from his mother Mr. Hiram Bickerdyke kindly sends me others written to her. I give them here that you may know further of the great esteem and love felt for her by those in high places. The first is from Mrs. Livermore, dated Melrose, Mass., September 5, 1897:

My Dear Comrade and Friend: I have requested my publisher to send you by express a copy of my last book, which is "The Story of My Life." I presume you will receive it before this reaches you. When you have read it I want you to write me your opinion of it, and tell me how you have enjoyed it and the many pictures illustrating it. I will tell you why I want you to do this. My publisher is an old soldier, although not an old man, for he went into the service at eighteen and came out at twenty-one, doing valiantly, and yet coming out well and unwounded. He has the greatest admiration for you, and at his suggestion his post celebrated your eightieth birthday—away off here, more than one thousand miles from you, in Connecticut. He is going to publish a circular containing the opinions of many distinguished people concerning the book, such as Bishop Vincent, Lady Henry Somerset, Frances Willard, Robert Collyer and others like

them, and he wants to print your testimonial with theirs. I am sure you will not refuse him. I should also be very proud to have your name and your testimonial among theirs.

I was very glad to get your letter and very glad you had so good a time on your eightieth birthday. I think more highly of the soldiers in Kansas for their kind remembrance of you. You stand at the head of all the women who went into relief work, and I have said and written that we have three pictures of you framed in our house. One is in my study, another in the sitting-room, and Lizzie has one in her room. Ella Norris, my married daughter, has a framed picture of you in her library. Mr. Worthington, my publisher, has a picture of you in his office. You see, you have other friends than those in Kansas. Last Sunday Colonel Wilcox, of Elgin, Ill., called on me. He is in the east visiting his married daughter. He spoke of you very gratefully and said you saved the life of the major of his regiment, who was in the Gayoso Hospital and had pneumonia while he lay wounded and was very low. But for your excellent care, he said, he would have died. I presume there are many who can tell that story. Mr. Livermore and Lizzie, who are the only members of our family at home just now, send their love to you. Be sure to write me your opinion of my book. Yours in love,

MARY A. LIVERMORE.

There is another letter from Mrs. Livermore to Mrs. Bickerdyke, dated July 3, 1899. It shows the same devoted love and unabated interest between the two noble women, and in it Mrs. Livermore begs the dear old mother to take better care of herself and to live more quietly. She tells her: "I think you should not journey about as much as you do, as change of climate is bad for you at your time of life, and traveling isn't as easy as staying in your own home."

A third letter is written to Mr. Bickerdyke in answer to one from him announcing his mother's dangerous illness. It is dated Melrose, Mass., November 8, 1901, the very day Mrs. Bickerdyke passed from earth life. It is as follows:

Dear Mr. Bickerdyke: I am saddened by your letter. If your mother rallies from this attack it will loosen her hold on life, and she will probably never be as well again as before. But both she and I have reached an age when death must be expected. We have exceeded the duration of life enjoyed by the majority. I hold myself in readiness to go at any time and I doubt not your mother has the same feeling. She has lived a grand, good life, packed with noble deeds wrought for

others, and will be welcomed with the plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant." I thank you for writing. Please keep me informed of your mother's condition, and if she is conscious, remember me in love to her. Whether she goes now or later, she and I will soon meet on the other side. I shall be eighty-one years old in a month, and although wonderfully well and strong for my age, I know I have but a hand's breadth of life before me, and am glad of the prospect of a not remote departure. Almost all my kindred and early friends have gone, and why should I wish to stay? Yours truly,

MARY A. LIVERMORE.

But the letter that touches me deepest is the one from "Andy," who was Mrs. Bickerdyke's "right-hand man," detailed by General Grant to accompany her through all her service—her "faithful Andy," as she called him, and between whom and herself there was a bond of particular strength and tenderness. He belonged to the Seventh Iowa Infantry, but at the time of Mother Bickerdyke's death was living at Marceline, Mo., and wrote this letter from there to Mr. Bickerdyke on November 14, 1901, just after receiving news of her going:

Dear friend, we received your kind letter with great regret. It was a sad blow to me—very sad. It is just as much loss to me as if she had been my own mother. I am very sorry to think she has passed away and I never got to see her. I have planned and hoped to come and see her at her home, but now that hope is dead. We were so much together through dangerous times and hardships, and she was like a mother to me. I hold for her the same honor, love and respect that a son should hold for a noble and loving mother. But she has gone to her long home—a pathway we must all go sooner or later—and I know if ever anyone is at rest it is she. I have been expecting this every day, and dreading it, too, for I so longed to go to see her once more. I went to Kansas City and to Leavenworth, too, but she was unable to come, and I regret I did not go to Ellsworth, where she was then, but I didn't have the means. Accept my sympathy and kindest regards in your sorrow, and hope to meet again. We all feel it deeply. It may not be long till we all shall meet where there is no more sorrow. I am seventy-one years old past. Have you one of her photographs? I would so love to have one. Send me one of your home papers with her death and sickness that I may know all the particulars. I must close by saying, Look up and do not grieve, for she is happy. Yours truly,

ANDREW SOMMERVILLE.

No one reading this can doubt but that it is the expression of an honest heart that loved much and was deeply grieved, though cheered by the sure hope of a future meeting, without which we should be bereft and poor indeed when our friends go from us "into the valley and the shadow of death."

As showing how surely the soldiers thought Mother Bickerdyke could get for them anything they wanted, I copy these lines, written on a little leaf torn from a notebook, now yellow with age. Mother Bickerdyke preserved it all these years, as she did many other mementoes of service rendered, as her son is doing now. It has no date:

"My good woman," it begins, "I have not eat anything for twenty-seven days but gruel, and I get tired of it. (Poor fellow, who would not get 'tired of it' in that time?) And I thought maybe I could get some potato soup. William Purtin, One Hundred and Three, Illinois Volunteers."

If, perchance, this should reach the eye of the writer, or his family, what memories it will awaken, and not the least pleasant among them will be the memory of the "good woman" to whom he so confidently applied for "potato soup." Knowing her, we feel sure his pitiful appeal was granted.

CHAPTER XX.

OTHER LETTERS.

> And love steals slyly through the loud acclaim,
> To murmur a God bless you.
>
> —*Lowell.*

I have spoken of how Kansas delights to honor this noble woman, of the homes named for her, the welcomes once given her at encampments and campfires, but inadvertently I have failed to tell of the "Mother Bickerdyke Home and Hospital" at Emporia, Kan. It was dedicated in 1895 and is supported by State funds. Not only the old soldiers, but also their widows and orphans, their mothers, if need be, are cared for here, and much is done to make it a pleasant, homelike place for those to whom we owe so much. Its management and equipment are similar to that of the Mother Bickerdyke Home at Ellsworth. Thus it is we keep her name and her memory fresh; thus we honor her; but more than all is the love we bear her, the image of her deeply enshrined in our hearts.

Among the old soldiers who responded to my request for stories of Mother Bickerdyke is one living in Manhattan, Kan., who wrote me thus:

If I remember right, it was in the campaign of 1880. General John A. Logan was the principal speaker at a Republican rally at Peoria, Ill. During the time of his visit to the city, then my home, I, with others, attended an informal reception given him. Among other topics of interest that of pensions was introduced. The General spoke of the difficulty in getting proper proof of the justice of one's claim before the Pension Department, and especially with the Medical Board. "The facts are," said the General, "the boys that did the actual fighting had poor hospital records, while the hospital '*bummer*' had the advantage. You boys all know

Mother Bickerdyke, God bless her! She had a case in point. I have forgotten the soldier's surname, but I know she called him 'Joe.' There was difficulty in getting the right kind of proof in his case. The Examining Board found what was presented unsatisfactory and 'Joe's' claim was rejected. But Mother Bickerdyke was not to be beaten in that awy. She knew she was right and she would not give up—not she. She brought 'Joe' to Washington and calling on me said, 'General, I want you to go to the Pension Department with me. I have a crippled soldier with me and I want to have him examined by the Board of the Pension Department.' I told her I was willing to do everything I could for her—as who would not who knew her?—but that I had some doubts about the Department granting her request for a personal examination. 'Well,' she said, 'that's what we have come here for and we are not going back without it.' Even yet I can see the flash of her eyes and hear the determined ring in her voice as she said this. I took her and 'Joe' to the Commissioner of Pensions and stated her case to him. He looked doubtful and I thought her request would not be granted. I told him something of Mother Bickerdyke's service in the army and said she outranked me and every other General I had ever known or heard of. The Commissioner replied: 'In honor of Mother Bickerdyke, of whom I have heard so much, I will grant this request.' Up to this time she had said nothing, but now she thanked him in her hearty, sincere way and then, turning quickly to the old soldier, she said, 'Joe, are your legs clean?' From that moment her case was won. 'Joe' was granted a liberal pension and they went home happy and gratified. The fact was,'' concluded the General, '' 'Joe' had no hospital record, but his 'legs' were 'clean,' and Mother Bickerdyke's determination carried the day.''

Knowing the interest with which they would be read, I made a very earnest effort to get letters written by Mother Bickerdyke to her soldier boys in the years since the close of the war. But, whether because such letters were not preserved, or having been preserved, are too precious and too personal for public use, or from other reasons, the effort did not meet with the success I hoped for. The good Senior Editor, always ready to do anything to prove his gratitude and love for one who did so much for him, sent me a very characteristic letter written to him from San Francisco under date of August 30, 1885. I copy it entire:

Dear Mr. Jones: Your last was duly received, and it always gives me great pleasure to hear from you. I am very thankful for your cool and collected thoughts in answer to

my scolding letter, for I was sorely tried that they would attempt to manage me in that way, as if I were not capable of taking care of myself. It was not so much for the amount of money voted me as it was the manner in which they treated me. I felt very grateful to the soldiers for the present and am sorry it was turned into an insult,—to them as well as to myself. It was wholly through the egotism of some of our Pacific coast delegates that this affair was so meanly managed.

They thought it would sound very fine to have circulated around that they had charge of Mother Bickerdyke, and they had their plans laid that four or five dollars was all they would give me at once, as "the old lady had not judgment enough to know how to spend it to the best advantage"—these are their very words. If I am obliged to have a guardian, let it be a veteran, for then there would be some sympathy between us; but this Commander Warfield enlisted late in March, while Lee surrendered the 11th of April following—so he can boast of an honorable discharge! But enough of this at present. But before I close I wish to inform you that I have not seen or heard anything of the five hundred dollars. Please write at your early convenience. From Mother B. to her faraway boy.

P. S.—You will find a very good account of my work in "The Boys in Blue," and also in Gail Hamilton's "Woman's Wrongs."

I give this letter with no thought of stirring up strife or contention. That would be useless and very undesirable, but simply because it is so like the dear mother when provoked to "righteous indignation," as assuredly she had reason to be in this case. Remembering how she was entrusted, "without note or bond," with many thousands of dollars of money and millions of dollars worth of sanitary supplies in war times, and afterwards in her missionary work in New York and other cities, and for the sufferers in the great forest fires in Michigan and the Chicago fire—the Fitch & Gould Railroad Company alone placed ten thousand dollars in her hands for this purpose, leaving her to use it according to her own *judgment*—remembering, too, the amounts in money and provisions and clothing given to her to be used for the destitute Kansans in the year when, from Indian raids, droughts, and the "plague of the grasshopper," our fair prairies were laid waste, and our homes made desolate, and how scrupulously every penny and every

article was made to do "the greatest good to the greatest number," how can we wonder that she felt deeply hurt and indignant to have it said that she had not "judgment enough" to make the best use of a paltry five hundred dollars? Her lack was not in judgment, but in too great forgetfulness of herself and her needs; the needs of others were never forgotten. Shall we condemn her for this following in the footsteps of the "Elder Brother?" This loving service, so deep, so sincere, that self has no place there? Rather let us be glad that we have had her among us—a strong, beautiful type of motherhood, a "cup bearer" to the very last here, and still, we must believe, a "cup bearer" in the new life to which she has gone.

Another soldier boy between whom and Mother Bickerdyke there was a great love, J. S. Eastwood, formerly of Illinois, now of Eureka, Kan., sends me ten beautiful letters that she wrote him in the years from 1888 to 1893. This man is one of the two boys of eighteen who each lost a leg at the battle of "Peach Tree Creek" and were cared for by Mrs. Bickerdyke in her hospital at Marietta, Ga. They were so young and so alike in many ways that she called them her "babies" and her "twins." (The other "twin" is Alvin Waite, of the 127th Illinois Infantry, as Mr. Eastwood was of the 48th Illinois Infantry.) These letters are teeming with love and motherly interest, full of a mother's solicitude. How she cautions him about being careful not to get a fall on the "poor stump" of a leg left him! She tells him: "Whenever you think to go out in slippery weather remember your Mother Bickerdyke forbids it." She rejoices with him in having a dear wife and children, and plans to meet him either in his own home or at encampments in different places. She tells him of her health, of her hopes and plans, her work, and all the "ups and downs" of daily life. She tells him of meeting one doctor who attended him while he was in the hospital, and of having a letter from another, and how tenderly they spoke of him. She says: "Dr. Gour says in his

last letter to me, 'Can it be possible Eastwood is up and doing? God bless him!'" adding, 'Were there ever two such sympathetic men as Dr. Goslin and Dr. Gour? I revere these two doctors as I do my soldier boys. They were grand men and true, and did their work without flinching." She writes of her plan to have them (Mr. Eastwood and his "twin," Mr. Waite) meet at St. Joseph, Mo., at an encampment and introduce them to Dr. Goslin, saying, "The old Doctor's heart will leap for joy to see you. When I told him I had met you in Topeka he said, 'God has preserved those boys; God bless them!' Now be sure and go," she urges, "it will be a rare treat for you and your wife. We may never have such an opportunity to meet again such dear old friends." She tells him Dr. Goslin is "the same lovable, kind and affectionate doctor that he was at Marietta, and how kindly he spoke of you. No father could speak more highly of you." She wants to "keep my boys all together as far as possible." They have such deep and sacred hold on her heart she cannot let them go, so she writes and writes, and writes, in sickness and in health, even as an own mother would do. What wonder the soldiers cherish these letters even as they cherish her memory? What wonder that they count them too precious to give to the public, but would hold them sacred to themselves alone? To us all her memory is as a precious gem—a "pearl of great price" in life's casket; but to the soldier it is doubly, trebly so, because of the hardships, the dangers, and the privations they bore together, and all she did and was to them. Of her we may say in the quaintly beautiful words of proverbs: "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all," and truly her own "work shall praise her."

Mr. Alvin Waite (the other "twin") writes of her:

I never saw that dear old woman but once after the war. That was at the National Encampment at St. Louis some years since. She there corralled about a dozen of us old cripples in the parlor of the Southern Hotel. She would not let any of us get ourselves a chair. She formed a circle, taking a seat

in the center, and there talked, laughed and cried alternately as she told each how or under what circumstances she found us, and how she kept many of us alive for many days. It was remarkable how she remembered at what battlefields she found us each one. She remembered most of our names. Dear Mother Bickerdyke is now only a memory. She has gone to her great reward.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN WHICH WE SAY GOOD-BYE.

"Every age
Bequeaths the next for heritage
No lazy luxury of delight,
But strenuous labor for the right."

And we shall best show our love and reverence for Mother Bickerdyke by imitating her in all her good works and by standing as stanchly and as fearlessly for the right as she ever did. Though we no longer need army nurses, the sick and the poor are always with us, and Peace has her victories, her occasions for the use of heroic virtues and bravery, no less surely than a time of War. While life lasts—while "we hope and resolve and aspire and pray," we shall have need of women as well as men with "strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands," such as our Mother Bickerdyke was. Her memory will be ever fresh with us. Her blunt honesty, the plain, unadorned English in which she clothed her thoughts, the homely truths she uttered, will stay with us and will help us to "quit our meanness" and live clean and true in all places and under all circumstances. We shall remember how often she told us "it doesn't pay to be little or mean; nothing pays but love and decency and truth."

We shall see her as she was when, in the strength and joy of her mature womanhood, she took up her arduous work in the army, putting aside the detaining hands of her little sons that other mothers' sons might be cared for, bringing something of the order and comfort of home into the dreary hospitals; making glad the "waste places" wherever she went; so trustworthy, so competent that none feared to trust her;

so determined and untiring that she never "went to the wall" in acknowledged defeat. We shall follow her in memory through camp and field and upon the long marches through all those terrible years, the ever-recurring scenes of which made such deep lines on her face and still deeper, more ineffaceable ones upon her tender woman's heart, we shall see her a ministering angel to the sick and dying, listening to the last message from lips fast growing cold, gathering up the precious pictures of mother, wife, children, sister or sweetheart the soldier had carried through all the cruel years of separation, the sight of which had helped him to do his duty "as a man and a soldier to God and my country," as one brave boy wrote in his "good-bye" letter. How tenderly and with what wise sympathy she writes the letter to send with these keepsakes, telling how nobly the soldier did his duty, how bravely he answered "Here!" at the roll call of Death, stamping it all with such high patriotism and holy love of country, with such joy of service in her bitter need, that the spirit of the one bereft was upborne by the joy of sacrifice and made strong to bear the lonely days yet to come. We follow her while she searches under the midnight sky over the death-strewn field at Fort Donelson; we go with her on and on to Shiloh, to Savannah, Perrysville, Louisville, Memphis, Vicksburg, Jackson, Corinth, Pittsburg Landing, Fort Henry, Huntsville, Chattanooga, Mission Ridge—on and on through all the field hospitals of the Atlanta campaign, at Nashville, and so "on to the sea" with Sherman and his gallant men. We see her watching with aching heart through seventeen hard fought battles, caring for thousands of wounded, seeing human bodies mangled and torn in every conceivable way—bleeding and dying—and we wonder how did woman's eyes keep their sight? How did woman's heart endure such horrors, such feaful anguish? No wonder she used to cover her face close with her hands and say, "Oh, it will haunt me forever, forever!" Yet she never let any scene weaken her, but shut her eyes as far as possible to the horror

and saw only the need for action, the work that was ever before her—grand old Mother Bickerdyke. No soldier was ever braver, none could do more than she did that we might have "one country and one flag." Words seem so empty when I try to tell of it all, but the heart knows—the hearts of the soldiers and of those who love them, scattered all over our land—east, west, north and south—these hearts know the story of Mother Bickerdyke and will cherish it to their dying day—and beyond! beyond! It is a story that cannot die while we love our country. So long as we can be thrilled by heroic deeds or gladdened by loving service, this story will live, and we shall say over and over again with ever deepening love and gladness, "Thank God for Mother Bickerdyke and the work she did," and to the story of her army life we shall add that of her life among the poor in New York, Chicago and San Francisco—yes, in any city or town where she pitched her tent and tarried for a time. We shall tell how she helped the discharged soldiers to find a place and a way to make a home and a "happy household clime for weens and wife." We shall hear again her ringing call for help, her impassioned plea for money, food and clothing for the struggling Kansans, so many of them her "boys," when Indian raids and the "plague of the grasshopper" had left them destitute. We shall see her the most loved and honored of all at campfires and reunions. How her face glows with love and joy as the brave old "boys" crowd around her! How they hug her until it "seems as if they would break every bone in her body." How eager they are to tell her the story of their efforts, their failures and their successes since the war, and she listens—listens with a word of encouragement for one, a word of praise for another, and words of love for all. Dear old Mother Bickerdyke!

We follow her on through the lingering years—years that, though they left the marks of growing age and feebleness upon her body, yet left the strong mind untouched, the heart still serene and brave, and oh, how we glory in her womanhood! How we rejoice to

hold her among us! How we delight to honor her in every way possible, trying to blot out with our kindness the memory of her years of hardship and denial, though we would never forget the grandness of the service rendered through them all. We hear her saying again, "I have a commission from God to do all I can for every miserable sinner that comes my way. He is always sure of two friends—God and me," and we know that only the opening of the great book of Life will reveal the extent and beauty of her work, that only the angels of love can keep the record true and tell of the thousands to whom she has not only helped to bring bodily health, but to whom she has brought the good tidings of hope and love. We know that, through her brave gospel of hope, work and care many have been brought back to manhood and womanhood, many have left the ways of sin and entered upon the beautiful, though rugged paths of life and love. Faithful old Mother Bickerdyke!

Again the bells are ringing to celebrate her eightieth birthday and friends are coming from far and near for one more meeting with her. A meeting that, though the shadow of the parting was over all, was yet a sacred and happy time. We hear the words of praise and of benediction as she moves among the throng, bright and cheery, though her face is deeply lined with the story of the passing years, and her soft brown hair is white as snow. Her eyes are sunken, but they have not lost their sparkle; they hold yet the holy depths of mother love and a great pride shows in them as she looks upon the manly forms of her "boys," and hears their words of welcome and congratulation. They urge her to visit them in their own homes—to come here and go there, but she says a kindly "No" to them all now, for her race was almost run and her home, her son were the dearest of all, and she would stay with them while she might. "I am old now," she said, "and all I want is to be let alone, to live quietly at home as any other woman would. I've had enough of publicity. Let me rest. Let me rest."

So the quiet months pass, and the end comes nearer, nearer, but with no dark clouds, no forebodings, only a peaceful letting go of earthly things and a firmer grasp and comprehension of things spiritual, a trustful resting in the love that guided and sustained her through all of the busy, changeful years of earth life, and that would still guide and sustain her. She knew that, come what might, she could not "drift beyond the Father's care." She did not lose her cheerfulness; her interest in those for whom she had lived and worked for so long was unchanged. She was Mother Bickerdyke to the last here, and is she not still Mother Bickerdyke in that Home "not built with hands" to which she has gone?

A great peace rested on the beautiful cold face as she lay in her last sleep, and the story of her life was there—that life so deep and true and strong, so full of beautiful activities and of womanly sympathies —full of all that was good and beautiful, and yet but faintly foreshadowing the great soul that had looked out of its windows—a face it is good to have known and blessed to remember. A life consecrated to high duties, enriched by service, made holy by love—a life that must go on still, strong and true, tender and kind, blest and blessing. Hail, Mother Bickerdyke, hail and farewell!

MONUMENT AT GALESBURG, ILL.

APPENDIX I.

UNVEILING OF THE MONUMENT.

Under the most auspicious circumstances, and in the presence of a large concourse of veterans, visitors and citizens, the "Mother" Bickerdyke monument was unveiled to the public on yesterday afternoon. The attendant assemblage was imbued with that enthusiasm and deeply inculcated respect for the memory of that grand army nurse, which can only come from a knowledge of the woman's unselfish devotion to the needs of the suffering soldiers. The patriotic melodies of the band enlivened the occasion and brought added inspiration. The vocal music under the leadership of Professor Bentley was good to a degree and was appropriate to the time and place. The addresses, from first to last, were delivered in a pleasing and acceptable manner and were well timed. The program was carried out without a hitch and no untoward incident occurred to mar this successful historic event.

The program was initiated with music by the band, after which a prayer of fervent and inspiring sentiments was offered by the department chaplain, Mrs. Ruby Loring. Mrs. Fannie Blazer, who as the president of the Mother Bickerdyke Association had charge of the exercises of the afternoon, conducted them throughout in a capable and business-like manner that won unstinted words of praise from all.

A pleasing interpolation at this point was the reading by Hon. Wilfred Arnold of the Mother Bickerdyke memorial appropriation, which became a law of the state of Illinois July 1, having been signed the 15th of May preceding by the then state executive, Richard Yates.

Mrs. Kitson was introduced by Mrs. Fannie Blazer to the audience following the reading of the law as passed and was accorded a highly complimentary reception by the audience of

people gathered to witness the unveiling. Mrs. Kitson, who wrought the noble design of the monument, has assuredly created a noble conception of sentiment and tenderness, which is receiving none but words of praise from every side.

The song, "Tenting Tonight," was sung by the following male voices, led by Prof. Bentley: W. B. Carlton, Earl Bridge, Everett Hinchliff, Harry Hammond, Victor Lytle, Ira Bacon, Henry Arnold, John McHard, Ray Arnold and Howard Williamson. The address of welcome by Mayor Sanborn was next delivered to the visitors assembled upon the occasion to commemorate anew the deeds of Mother Bickerdyke and to cement more strongly the ties of comradeship. Mayor Sanborn said:

"President and Members of the Mother Bickerdyke Monument Association, Comrades, Ladies and Gentlemen: It was my fortune to have personally known Mother Bickerdyke before she entered the service of the Union army. Though a hard-working woman with a big family, when the lamented Lincoln called for men and women, she was among the first to respond. With what ardor she plied her calling, privates and officers alike are well acquainted. She was the soldiers' friend. In sickness, in distress or death, in rain or sunshine, in warmth or in cold, night or day, she was on hand to guide and help the boys who were helping to preserve the Union of our fathers.

"It is one of the proudest moments of my life on this occasion, for, as the official head of the city of Galesburg, I am designated to extend to the ladies of the Bickerdyke Monument Association and their distinguished guests and all comrades the most hearty welcome and Godspeed of the loyal people of our city, and to say to you that we as a city are proud to have the remains of so good and useful a person deposited with us for safe keeping for the ages to come.

"We are also prouder that this beautiful monument, beautiful in structure and design, has been erected permanently in our city, and we are glad to have this opportunity to add our part in honoring so noble a woman, and we express our thanks and, as the countless concourse shall view and pass this magnificent statue, they will ponder and say, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.'"

Mrs. Marietta Erwin of Galesburg next unveiled the monument, and as the folds of the old flag gracefully fell to the earth and revealed the monument, clear-cut and artistic, the audience gave forth loud and enthusiastic applause for the honor of the woman whose deeds were portrayed, and a complimentary greeting to the sculptress.

Mrs. Fannie Blazer, as president of the Mother Bickerdyke Memorial Association, made at this juncture the speech of presentation and gave over the monument to the care of the Board of Supervisors.

The speech was brief, but of elevating sentiment and spoken with a sincerity and depth of conviction. Said the speaker:

"Throughout this entire republic; throughout the confines of the universe we oft hold exercises of a like nature, which celebrate the heroic deeds of brave men, but today we are assembled to do honor to the heroic, noble and inspiring deeds of a woman, whose character, in its gentleness, in its firmness, its wonderful patriotism and love for humanity has been surpassed by no one in the annals of profane history.

"Mother Bickerdyke was a resident of Galesburg, and this occasion does Galesburg great honor, and Illinois, the great commonwealth we all love so well, is also honored in having the body of the beloved nurse in her soil.

"We are met today almost under the shadows of the walls of the old church building where one Sunday morning Mother Bickerdyke arose and pledged her services to the union and never ceased in her devotion to the nation and her boys until her heart was stilled in death.

"It was by the united efforts of the small body of women known as the Mother Bickerdyke Memorial Association, with the aid and generosity of the great state of Illinois, that this unveiling was made possible. It is peculiarly relevant that this piece of art, serving to commemorate the deeds of a noble woman, should be created by the hands of woman.

"The lessons to be derived from its elevating sentiment and uprightness of purpose are plain and speak in a mute language of love and patriotism. May the countless thousands of feet which shall pass and repass this monument in after years uphold hearts that shall look upon it and be imbued with honor for our grand, inspiring 'Old Glory' and love of country and native land."

The presentation of the monument to the board of supervisors then followed. This was done by reason of the group being located upon county grounds and it will be cared for henceforth and at all times by the county of Knox.

Hon. James Rebstock, as chairman of the Knox County Board of Supervisors, accepted the charge of the welfare of the monument in the following pertinent words:

"Mr. Blazer: It is my pleasant duty as chairman of the board of supervisors in their behalf and in behalf of the people of this county to accept this monument which has been erected to the memory of Mary A. Bickerdyke.

"Mother Bickerdyke, as she was affectionately called in Northern hospital, camp and field, is one of those characters which will live eternal in history and in the hearts of the patriotic citizens of this country. In future ages when all who are assembled here today shall have long been numbered among the dead, her name will stand as the embodiment of womanly patriotism. In her is represented the loyalty, the steadfast devotion to the cause of freedom, and the tireless efforts of the women of this country to relieve the sick and dying soldier, and to mitigate, if possible, the terrible sufferings, the unspeakable horrors of war.

With open arms, therefore, do we accept this gift, and pledge ourselves and the coming generations to guard and defend the spot where it stands with that earnestness and patriotic zeal, and with the same love that characterized her whom it represents, in all her ministrations on the field of battle in that great war for freedom."

The address of dedication was delivered by former Governor Richard Yates and was an effort that both pleased in sentiment and thoroughly entertained in delivery, which was interrupted frequently by hearty applause. The speech follows:

"Called by the voice of partial friends among you, I have come here today to say a few words upon this sweetly solemn occasion and in this imposing presence. It is my duty to endeavor, to the best of my feeble ability, to give suitable expression to the sentiments which have brought you here and to the teachings of this hour. We are not here for entertainment today; we are here for the solemn recognition of unutterable obligation.

"I am persuaded, fellow citizens, that, next to religion, the chief glory of the world and its civilization today is the citizenship enjoyed by Americans. It is a citizenship cherishing justice and embellishing freedom and adorning manhood. Hence, all along our wending way, it has been deemed worth fighting for, and worth dying for. Every true American has considered it his duty to battle for an elevated and perfect civilization. Out of such aspirations in the American's heart, such emotions in his inmost soul, have come the devotion and the sacrifice which have placed us upon the pinnacle of pride which we occupy today in the sisterhood of nations. I am convinced that every war fought by America, every degree of progress it ever attained, every onward step it ever took, was to establish an unprecedented, unequaled and sublime citizenship. And I am satisfied that every effort put forth to establish that citizenship is to be honored and remembered by the citizens of today.

"For this hour, the thoughtful of this nation live again in the tumultuous times of 'sixty-one.' Visions of the past, crowded with fast rushing events, rise today in the mind of the middle-aged man. He remembers the preliminary excitement. The country convulsed from day to day with ominous occurrences. This state trembling beneath the mighty blows struck by renowned champions of public opinion. Every community stirred to its foundations in the mighty crisis. John Brown partakes of the excited spirit of the times. The unfortunate old man is easily overcome. John Brown's body lies in its grave. But the spirit that poured its life into his ceases not its onward march, and in fear of that feeling, now ruling in a million hearts, the great slave conspiracy resolves to resort to desperate measures.

"The new President, leaving his Illinois home for the national capital, is so surrounded by menacing difficulties, that

he owns his strong mind, courageous heart and mighty soul to be unequal to the unprecedented task. To his neighbors assembled to bid him farewell he says:

"'There has fallen upon me a task such as did not rest even upon the father of his country, and, so feeling, I cannot but turn and look for that support without which it will be impossible to perform that great task. I turn, then, and look to the great American people and to that God who has never forsaken them.'

"Grand and sublime figure! How he towers aloft in his pure nobility; how he guided this struggling and suffering country with patient, merciful hand; how he stood like a shield and a bulwark strong and firm, between the Union and all the perils that assailed it. Fling open the baskets; pour forth the flowers; cause his tomb to blush and to quiver and to glow with all the beauty and the loveliness and grace that nature can bestow, and still the spirit of the grand, majestic man will break from beneath the fragrance, and, rising godlike over us, reflect the light of a matchless integrity and prudence and perfection over all that is or will be fair and good in Americanism.

"Noble men of sixty-one! Stephen A. Douglas stands in Chicago saying: 'Before God my conscience is clear; I have struggled long for a peaceful solution; the return we receive is war; there are only two sides to this question; there can be no neutrals in this war, only patriots and traitors.'

"'With malice towards none and charity for all,' call after call comes from the capitol for troops. The call is not in vain. Massachusetts sends her noblest, New York puts forth her proudest, Ohio furnishes her bravest, California despatches her boldest, Illinois forwards her best. Grierson, Ingersoll, Prentiss and Rawlins; Morrison, McClernand, Palmer and Black; Oglesby goes; Grant goes; Logan goes.

"Troops the nation called one day,
Men of valor, strong and steady;
Ere the echo died away
Illinois had answered 'Ready!'

"In the camps and on the ocean,
Braving ever tropic heat,
Proving ever their devotion,
Knowing nothing of defeat;
All they had thus bravely tendered,
Here and there death claimed a boy
Freely, but with tears, surrendered
By the State of Illinois.

"Troops the nation called one day,
Men of valor, strong and steady;
Ere the echo died away
Illinois had answered 'Ready!'"

"Halleck and Hancock, Sherman and Sheridan; Hooker and Burnside; Thomas and Franklin; hundreds more, whose

names we know; thousands more whose names are unknown to us; the whole grand, heroic host! Mighty convulsion! The entire continent rocking to and fro! The battle cry of freedom ringing from ocean to ocean! Outbursts of loyalty shaking every northern commonwealth! Puritan and pioneer burning with patriotic zeal! Government of, for and by the people shall not perish! You all know the result. Popular government did survive and so did the Union and Liberty.

"And, ah, let us not forget that there was a parting in a million homes. How often that parting was a parting forever between sweetheart and lover, between sister and brother, between husband and wife, between son and mother! Oh, for scarlet geraniums and sweet verbenas, and purple violets to strew the graves of the lover and brother! Oh, for pure white jessamine and yellow buttercup and delicate heliotrope so to cover those of the sister and sweetheart, as to fully and fittingly express the agony of that parting, the pitiful but unpitied throes of the battle death, and the untold suffering of those ruined loving lives at home. Oh, for begonia and petunia and hyacinth and fuchsia and lily and rose for the mother and the wife whose son and husband went, then, from their embraces, away to the city, on to the camp, and at last to the nameless mound near the enemy's prison stockade. Sublime sacrifices, glorious and grand, tender and touching, beautiful and blessed! The fragrance of their memory hovers over us today like a benediction from the past!

"Rest on, embalmed and sainted dead,
Dear as the blood ye gave,
No impious footstep here shall tread
The herbage of your grave;
Nor shall your glory be forgot
While Fame her record keeps,
Or Honor points the hallowed spot
Where Valor proudly sleeps.
On Fame's eternal camping ground
Their silent tents are spread;
And Glory guards with solemn round
The bivouac of the dead."

"Among the sacrifices of that awful day and time none were greater than that of the women—none more intense, none more agonizing, none more touching. Never did a boy in blue, falling prone upon his face with a jagged bullet in his heart, stop the bullet there. It had no stopping place until it had passed over hillside and river, over mountain and lake, until at last it pierced some loving woman-heart at home.

"Rank and station, condition and situation made no difference. The awful desolation invaded alike the life of fashion and wealth at the metropolis and 'the short and simple annals of the poor.' In the great majority of cases the home entered and blasted was a humble one. In such instances the actual manual effort of the soldier had been actually and posi-

tively needed before the war days. In not a few cases a soldier who survived wounds and disease returned home to a family which had lost the mother or the daughter because of actual exposure in the fields resulting in some fatal malady, possibly pneumonia or consumption. But even when the calamity was not so dire as this, who can number the women whose lives were shortened and existence beclouded by the ever-present anxiety increasing at times to an appalling intensity? Four hundred thousand homes wore, at the end of the struggle, the badge of the 'last full measure of devotion.' And every family of the two million which furnished armed defenders of the flag suffered almost as much in anticipation as did the four hundred families in reality.

"There was no inspiring bugle call to rouse flesh and spirit to an enthusiasm absolutely disregardful of danger, among the suffering, waiting ones at home. There was no 'whirlwind of the battle charge, where men become iron with nerves of steel' there. On the contrary, every nerve was tense and quivering and every faculty was alert and strained, expecting the long awaited blow.

"What will ever be done—what can ever be done—to perpetuate the memory and keep alive the reality of these sacrifices? Not even all the men who actually died in the 'red glare of the cannon's mouth' will ever have a monument erected over them by the republic. Such a testimonial, however deeply and universally desired, is impossible. A central monument in every county seat throughout the republic, commemorating the sufferings in war of American womanhood in general, is impracticable. But happily it is possible for one commonwealth to pay its tribute to one war-woman of heroism; we have the proud privileges of participating in this tribute.

"I deem it fortunate for Illinois and for all who have, by reading and by sitting at the feet of wisdom, learned of woman's work in the Civil war, that in one case, at least, a suitable memorial of womanly devotion during that period is possible.

"The ladies of this Mother Bickerdyke Memorial Association have made this possible. They dedicate today to 'Mary Bickerdyke, Mother,' this memorial. She, in whose honor we meet here, was an army nurse—one of the most distinguished of army nurses.

"She not only suffered as all suffered who were of the sex of tenderness and sympathy, but because she had had training as a nurse she went to the front in 1861—not to be mustered out until 1866.

"In the addresses already delivered, the noble characteristics of this noble woman have been so fully referred to that no further effort can add to her fame, but the efforts of this woman and her associates can never be recalled too often or too publicly.

"Oh heroic sisterhood of army nurses, thy devotion shall never be forgotten while valor is honored and bravery is praised!

"Beloved sisterhood, who walked amid appalling horrors of pain and death—scenes from which strongest men turned away—who can paint thine own exquisite torture amid all thy bravery and serenity? Thine it was to stand, all but helpless, though never hopeless, while surgeon's knife added agony unspeakable to many a racked body apparently about to separate from soul.

"Thine it was to listen to messages for the loved ones at home, whispered with fast failing breath.

"Do you, people of Illinois of today, think that testimonials either of stone or bronze or flowers can ever repay an army nurse for these demands upon her very life?

"Of course she had her happy hours—when knowledge came of victory over fever or other dread diseases or over frightful wounds—and that the message to be sent home was of hope and joy and light and life.

"Possibly no woman in all the world found these hours more exquisite than the army nurse—and possibly no such hours were more frequent and happy than those enjoyed by Mother Bickerdyke. At any rate, Mary Bickerdyke did her great duty. She bound up the wounds of the afflicted, and when she did so she administered a soothing balm to the lacerated hearts at home.

"Cairo and Paducah, Fort Donelson and Shiloh, Corinth and Iuka, Vicksburg and Memphis, Chattanooga and Atlanta, Altoona and Marietta, Huntsville and Beaufort, Washington and Camp Butler are a few of the places where she fought in hospitals, a gigantic winning battle against death for human lives.

"With her hot foods and soups and her stimulating drinks and restoratives, she fought among the wounded ranks upon the battlefield, too.

"She tore up and used to bandage wounds all her clothing which was capable of such use, although it was made, with care and patience, by loving ones back home in Illinois, who were full of the feeling that she needed such things more than anybody. She listened at night, on edges of battlefields, for groans of wounded men overlooked, and when she heard them went out herself through rain and storm, with lanterns and stretchers, and found such men and brought them in.

"She sang songs of home and heaven to dying men, while shot and shell fell in the midst of her field-hospital.

"She not only lessened the pain of thousands, but she contributed, by her contagious example and leadership, to the comfort of untold thousands more.

"By her persistence, at all hours of day and night, summer and winter, in besieging headquarters of commanding officers

for forwarding of supplies and furnishing of helpers—always granted because she simply would not be denied—she made every post commander come to his senses, and every army commander realize the importance of her department.

"In this way she indirectly improved the condition of thousands of sick and wounded in other sections—two results following: First, thousands of homes more happy, and second, the service benefited by loyalty more unfaltering and enlistment more unlimited.

"Is it any wonder that in councils of war and in halls of congress it was said of her, 'Her services were worth more to General Sherman's army than any brigadier general in it'?

"In three short furloughs during five full years of service she visited enough large cities and addressed enough large assemblages to obtain contributions of food and fruits and clothing and medicines and hospital furnishings and first-aid appliances that were ample.

"She knew what was needed, and went after it, and got it. Upon one occasion she was chief nurse or matron of hospitals in Memphis. There were nine thousand men in those hospitals. Milk was needed. It could be had only in limited quantities. It cost fifty cents a quart. She got a furlough. She came to Illinois. She begged for one hundred cows. She got them. I am happy to say that Jacob Strong of my own native town of Jacksonville donated the one hundred cows.

"Her re-entry into Memphis was amid the lowing of the one hundred cows and cackling of one thousand hens, and must have been one of the real triumphs of the war.

"Do you not suppose that there was more rejoicing over that triumph in at least nine thousand homes than there ever was over any bloody victory?

"I venture to say that at least nine thousand prayers for Mary Bickerdyke went right straight up to the throne of Mercy as soon as that invasion of Illinois was publicly known.

"She met all demands upon her; she hoped all things; she believed all things; she endured all things; she conquered all things; she was charity personified. The Almighty will be her generous rewarder in the Great Day when all things will be made right. Mrs. Bickerdyke never had any doubt about religious relationship. She stated once to Mary A. Livermore:

"'I have a commission from the Lord God Almighty to do all I can for every miserable creature who comes in my way; he is always sure of two friends—God and me.'

"She added her great and holy share to the stupendous sum total of sympathy and relief from suffering which characterized that day and which was the greatest demonstration of real charity ever seen by mankind since the Savior walked among the sons of men and healed them all.

"Therefore, honor and glory and praise and love to Mother Bickerdyke, and so long as lovers of true manhood and womanhood here come and go may there be found here everlasting

memorial for her, to cause inspiration for the loftiest deed and the most noble aim—to keep alive not only patriotism but love of right and of humanity.''

The unveiling poem of Z. P. Hotchkiss, junior vice commander of the G. A. R., was given with great depth of feeling, and in the closing sentiments, with the salute to the dead as paid by the old soldiers to the nurse who was so much admired and loved by all, the scene was peculiarly impressive. The following is the poem:

Unveiled by that banner, Mother,
This the picture on vision's screen,
Kneeling like a Spartan lover
Raising to soldier lips the old canteen.

Ladies, of this memorial, Mother
Thou, this work of enduring art,
For in the group, we discover,
The artist had a woman's heart.

This, the woman we call Mother,
Is your sister, that we adore,
In deeds of love none ranked above her,
In hospital or army corps.

The holiest name on earth—Mother—
Is the one we boys still like;
In memory there dwells no other
Like that of Mother Bickerdyke.

The Grand Army—dear dead Mother—
Circles, Camps, Tents and Corps,
Honor, as they would no other,
For they love the name you bore.

At midnight we have seen you, Mother,
Amid the wreckage of the fight.
Bravely stand, where dared no other,
And by your lantern's friendly light

Scanning each hero face, Mother,
With your woman's heart in grief,
There, where angels seemed to hover
You had brought the boy relief.

In our hearts your grave, Mother;
Love, the monument we rear;
You stood closer than a brother;
Our tribute, still, a veteran's tear.

Sleep thou in fair Lockwood, Mother,
Where floats that flag you loved the best,
Each memorial day we'll cover
With flowers thy tomb—there rest.

Here, in sad bereavement, Mother,
We hail you on the bivouac shore;
Comrades, Attention! Friends, uncover!
Salute the dead, in peace, forevermore.

The song, ''Illinois,'' always popular with gatherings of a patriotic nature especially, was rendered by the male chorus.

The address by National Commander of the G. A. R. James Tanner, which followed, was a splendid effort, a rugged and satisfying speech filled with sentiments of noble patriotism and elevating precepts. Said the orator:

"Those olden days stir me to glorious and honored recollections. Well do I recall the splendid ability and noble deeds of that great war governor of Illinois, Dick Yates; that prince of soldiers, Gen. U. S. Grant, and the mighty eagle-eyed John A. Logan.

"The cause for which we are gathered also reminds me that we must, while honoring the man behind the gun, pay homage to the woman back of that man for her great sacrifices and heroic actions shall live as long as history is recorded.

"There was a time when our patriotism was at a low ebb, but it was ever and anon raised and kept living by the mothers, sisters and sweethearts. I tell you this day will always be a red letter day for the state encampments of Illinois history for the cause in which we are met today, to pay honor to the memory of woman.

"That civilization which has not paid homage to womanhood has fallen into decay. To discredit womanhood is to seal the doom of any people under the canopy of heaven.

"I admire the man that is desirous of leading a peaceful life, but when woman is insulted let him tear into the duskiest of fights."

At this point Commander Tanner devoted some time at length to the memory and deeds of Mother Bickerdyke and her hold upon the boys of Sherman's army and her wide reputation for ability and tenderness wherever the flag was unfurled.

The speech was concluded with a glowing and exalted compliment to the part women played in the War of the Rebellion and how their gentle words of soothing and deft touches made the men of war thank God for their presence and caused it to become easier for many a soldier to enter into the gates of heaven.

The final address of the afternoon's exercises was that delivered by Department Commander Gen. John C. Smith, who spoke as follows:

"After the pleasing ceremonies attending the unveiling of this monument designed to perpetuate the memory of one of America's noblest women, 'Mother Bickerdyke,' in which we have all participated, it is my intention to detain you but a few minutes. No language at my command, no poetry, no matter how choice in diction or sweet in rhythm, can add honor to the memory of one who did so much for our sick and wounded comrades as did this angel of hospital and battlefield. She was but a woman, such as we see about us, but such a woman as gives birth to heroes and by her loving kindness makes heroes of men.

"Illinois is proud of her warriors, and names among the foremost that silent commander, the greatest soldier the Anglo-Saxon race ever produced, Ulysses S. Grant, and beside him our own 'Black Eagle,' the great volunteer soldier, John A. Logan. Others may be named, as John M. Palmer, John A. Rawlins and General Philip Sidney Post, but above all are the rank and file, the private soldier, 'the men behind the guns,' who, if individually not as well known as the commander, yet collectively their deeds shine like the myriad of stars forming the milky way, dimming the brilliancy of many of the great stars and planets of the firmament.

"Glorious as were the deeds of our soldiery we must not overlook the patient wife or mother who through the silent watches of the dread nights pending an approaching battle prayed for the success of our arms and that the life of the son or husband be spared and they be permitted to return in safety to their loved home.

"Illinois had many such patriotic mothers and wives and our country was blessed with noble women.

"With Mary Bickerdyke was Aunt Lizzie Aiken and Mary A. Livermore, all of this state, thus forming a trio emblematical of deity, heaven born and noble representatives of the glorious womanhood of our God-given land of fair women and brave men.

"P. H. Taylor of Ionia, Mich., some 90 years of age and an old friend, on receipt of a program of these exercises sends me the following appropriate verse:

"There came into the army
God's one best gift to man;
She was a very angel
Assuaging grief and pain.
In passing near a bedside,
If she heard the words, 'My Wife,'
She knelt and caught the message
E'er fled the spark of life.

"That angel sent from heaven,
She surely did her part;
She learned each soldier's sorrow,
She cheered each soldier's heart;
She turned each tear-stained pillow,
She bathed each aching head,
She prayed beside the dying,
She wept each soldier dead.

"Then, comrades, see 'Our Mother,'
Give her a good salute;
Though tenting on fame's camping ground
She'll know a Free man's shout.
In records there are written
Names famous that you like,
But none so well worth keeping
As Mary Bickerdyke."

The unveiling exercises closed with a good, rousing chorus singing of the national hymn, "America." An informal social time was enjoyed by a number of those present, subsequent to the formal program, in meeting the national and department commanders, ex-Governor Yates, the sculptress, Mrs. Kitson, and others.

The organization of the Mother Bickerdyke association followed shortly after the death of the famous nurse. The matter was taken up by the local W. R. C. and they were aided by the G. A. R. and other organizations of the city. At first it was decided to raise enough money to raise a monument in this city, but it was found that so large a sum could not be secured from local sources. However, about $300 was raised, which was expended for a tombstone in Linwood cemetery over her grave.

In January, 1903, Representative Wilfred Arnold and Senator L. A. Townsend presented a request for an appropriation of $5,000 before the house and senate at Springfield. The matter was received favorably and the appropriation was accordingly made.

The services of the sculptress were then secured and the arrangement of matters of detail and the expenditure of the appropriation has been in the hands of the association.

All credit is due to those whose patriotic sentiment furthered so praiseworthy an undertaking and the part taken by all of these persons will long be remembered in connection with the enterprise. The officers are: President, Mrs. Fannie Blazer; secretary, Mrs. Nellie Compton; corresponding secretary, Mrs. Mary Efner; treasurer, Mrs. Emily McCullough.—*From the Galesburg Weekly Mail of May 24, 1906.*

Mother Bickerdyke's only living child, Mr. Hiram B. Bickerdyke, of Ericson, Mont., was kept from attending this unveiling by the illness of his wife. Other relatives of hers were there and were photographed sitting around the monument the day of the ceremonies.

APPENDIX II.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

The following is as complete a bibliography of material pertaining to Mother Bickerdyke as I have been able to make up to date. The two books, devoted wholly to her and the work she did, are "Mary A. Bickerdyke—Mother," by Mrs. Julia A. Chase, written at the instigation of the Women's Relief Corps of Kansas, published by the Journal Publishing House, Lawrence, Kan., in 1896, and "Mother Bickerdyke and the Soldiers," written by Mrs. Margaret B. Davis, published by the A. T. Dewey Fraternal Publishing Company, San Francisco, Cal. The others in the list give each a more or

less extended account of her life and work in connection with that of many others. They are:

"My Story of the War." By Mary A. Livermore. Published by A. D. Worthington & Co., Hartford, Conn., 1889.
"Women of the War." By Frank Moore.
"Our Army Nurses." By Mary A. G. Holland. Published in 1895.
"Boys in Blue." By Mrs. A. H. Hoge, of Chicago.
"Women's Relief Corps." Kansas.
"Under the Guns." By Mrs. Whittenmyer.
"Woman's Wrongs." By Gail Hamilton.
"Old Colony Memorial." Plymouth, Mass.
"Our Branches." Chicago Sanitary Commission.
An address by Mrs. Julia A. Chase, in volume VII of Kansas History.
The following newspapers give sketches of Mrs. Bickerdyke:
The St. Louis (Mo.) *Globe-Democrat* for May 23, 1897.
Topeka (Kan.) *Mail and Breeze*, July 9, 1897.
Kansas City *Times*, May 19, 1901, and November 14, 1901.
Topeka (Kan.) *Herald*, November 19, 1901.
Topeka (Kan.) *State Journal*, November 10, 1901.
Russell (Kan.) *Record*, November 16, 1901, and at various other dates before this one.
Russell (Kan.) *Reformer*, July 16 and 23, 1897, and November 16, 1901.
New York *Tribune*, December 1, 1901.
Milwaukee *Sentinel*, June 9, 1897.
Salina *Union*, September 17, 1903.
A Gypsum City, Kan., paper, date unknown.
Also a very interesting sketch of her was given in a Washington, D. C., magazine not long after the close of the war, written by Mrs. Mary Logan Tucker (a daughter of Gen. John A. Logan), who edited said magazine.

Sketches of her have been given in a great many papers and periodicals that I cannot mention. At the time of the celebration of her eightieth birthday on July 17, 1897, and again at the time of her death, November 8, 1901, there was probably not a paper in Kansas that did not print interesting articles about her, and such articles were given in the prominent newspapers of many different states, especially in the western states, where she was best known and loved.

In some of these sketches I have found help in the writing of my story, particularly so in the books "My Story of the War," "Boys in Blue," "Our Army Nurses," and "Mother Bickerdyke and the Soldiers," for all of which, as well as for the help given me by old soldiers and other personal friends, I make glad and grateful acknowledgment. May the kindness shown me be returned in tenfold measure to each heart and home, and may none of us fail to learn the lessons taught by this beautiful life of love and service lived in our midst by our dear old Mother Bickerdyke.

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